

Fall 2012 Second Edition

WE

an **AMJaMB** publication
a magazine exclusively for everyone



I Am Somebody, Beyond Inclusion

By Thomas E. Pomeranz, Ed.D.

page 31



page 47
also at
amjamb.com

Come visit Kelly at
411 Optimistic Way



Robert Feise
Sculptor, painter, writer, and
adventurous traveler

Photo by Ted Harris

From the Editor



Welcome to the second issue of **WE**, a magazine exclusively for everyone!

No matter our vocations, age, economic status, race, religion, color, or ability—we are all a natural part of the human experience. Daily, each of us touch and change the lives of others. How we go about it is a personal choice. Every page in **WE** is a demonstration of that.

There are many amazing people in our world that never hit the cover of a mainstream publication. In passing, some of these amazing people appear so “everyday,” doing ordinary things, on ordinary days. When, in fact, there is nothing ordinary about them at all.

My family is not ordinary.

We see life, not in terms of what we can't do, but in terms of “how do we make this happen?” We don't pity ourselves or question the circumstances that life presents us, but instead spend much time realizing the opportunity every situation makes possible.

Below is a picture of my family, absent my daughter Michelle, 21. However, she was the person behind the camera. An aspiring photographer, she longs for the world to discover her brother Ben as she has. His disabilities are not what define him or his family; it is the zest to live that does. Michelle says this all so clearly in her view through the camera's lens.

Enjoy our magazine. Keep it for a reference. It contains information not easily found elsewhere. Share it with others because it inspires. Display it on your coffee table or in your lobby—because the photos say as much as the words.

Terry Kozloff



WE

a magazine exclusively for everyone

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*See interview with the founder of **Blue Rose Videos** on page 51.*

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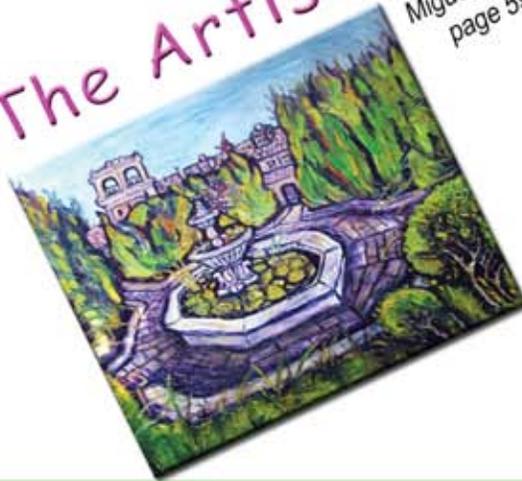
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Many thanks to the people who generously gave of their time and of their hearts to help make this magazine a reality.

Lorin Kaufman of Alchemia, a non-profit organization committed to sharing the voice of those experiencing different abilities with their community through the arts and vocational experiences. www.alchemia.org

Michael Chaney, artist and writer.

David Hughes of Opportunity for Independence, providing individualized services for people with developmental disabilities since 1991. www.ofiinc.org

Danielle Richardson of Alameda Parca, whose mission is to enrich the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families. www.parca.org

TAKING BACK THE “R” WORD

By Michael Chaney

The word *retarded* at one time did not have a negative meaning attached to it. Dictionary Online defines 'retard' as: "1. to make slow; or delay the development or progress of an action or process; to hinder or impede." But this definition does not judge the strengths of the people with this diagnosis. As a community we need to take back the word *retard* from people using it as a negative form or using it as an insult.

Why is it okay or at least acceptable to say *retarded* in front of a person with a disability?.

At one time the **R** word was solely used as a diagnostic tool. Over the years the word has transformed from a diagnosis to a disgusting slang term that is filled with negativity, hurt and insult. As a part of the disabled community, I am recalling the “**R**” word back to being a term that can be used for diagnosis purposes and within the disabled community. My hope is that the “**R**” word will never be used as a negative term again. It is not acceptable to belittle the disabled community. We have different abilities. Some of these abilities include strength, love, and hope. We have the ability to see beyond disability and color and see the true person within.



“The word *retarded* at one time did not have a negative meaning attached to it.”



TAKING BACK THE “**R**” WORD



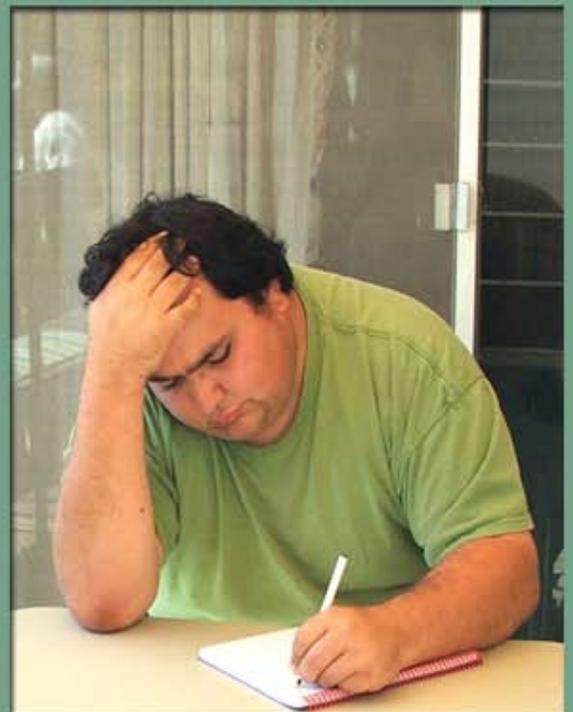
“I think that people make fun of us because they are uncomfortable.”

In my day program I am seen as a person. I am seen for who I really am. I believe that everyone in my program feels this same way. This is one of the first times in my life where I have found a place where I am allowed and encouraged to be myself. It sickens me to see my fellow peers being called the "R" word.

It is essential to treat the disabled community with respect and care. We are people who have been stared at, pointed at, and called names. But all we ask is for respect. I feel that is important to recall the use of the "R" word and to make it known to the public that the disabled community is standing up for ourselves and wanting people to get to know us for who we really are. I have been called this word many times because I have Tourette's Syndrome. I rub my hands in front of my face when I am feeling any strong emotion. This is something I do not have control over. The reason I tell this is because my peers all have conditions they do not have control over. How can people make fun of us for aspects that we cannot control?

I think that people make fun of us because they are uncomfortable. Maybe they even wonder what they would do in our shoes and it is easier to make fun of us than to get to know us. Disabled people are the most open people. We are wide open, accepting individuals who show acceptance for all people. Please accept us into your community and lives; all we want is fair treatment. ❖

Michael Chaney is an artist living and working in Marin County.



An Invitation

by Terry Kozloff

To visit a world filled with hope...

Maybe you will decide to stay.

Five years ago, Maria was sitting in her 10th grade history class listening to the teacher's lecture on the use of drugs and the potential consequences. In an attempt to dramatize his point the teacher said, "Do you want to end up riding around in a little yellow bus, drooling out the window, and then spend your day in the park?"

Maria felt that the teacher's point of view was that a life with brain damage is a life without hope.

However, what the teacher did not know was Maria's little brother did indeed drool, and not because he had used drugs. She also knew why her mom drove her little brother to school everyday--kids and adults alike, made fun of the little yellow bus.

Maria was upset and went to her counselor looking for support and guidance. He advised that she could try and hold the teacher accountable for the words that hurt her. However, he suggested that she not bring it up because "retribution is possible and it could impact your grade."

At day's end, Maria went home and told her mom of the experience. After a brief discussion, she knew what had to be done.

The next day she confronted the principal with the teachers words. The principal spoke to the teacher, and the teacher denied saying the hurtful words.

Maria thought to herself, "That is okay. A poor grade is not the worst thing that could happen. I did the right thing." That was most important to her.

Ultimately, the teacher did reflect upon his own character and the hurtful words that flowed from him without conscience. Two days later he admitted his error to the principal. "I didn't realize the scope of what I was saying. I am so sorry." The teenager learned something, and so did the teacher.

It was ignorance that drove the teacher's comments. It was complacency that drove the counselor's advice. It was love and righteousness that drove Maria.

To the world on the outside looking in, the lives of some people seem so hopeless. It just isn't always true.

The people on the following pages invite you to visit their world and stay if you like. They struggle, love, teach, and learn. But most of all they hope.



An Invitation

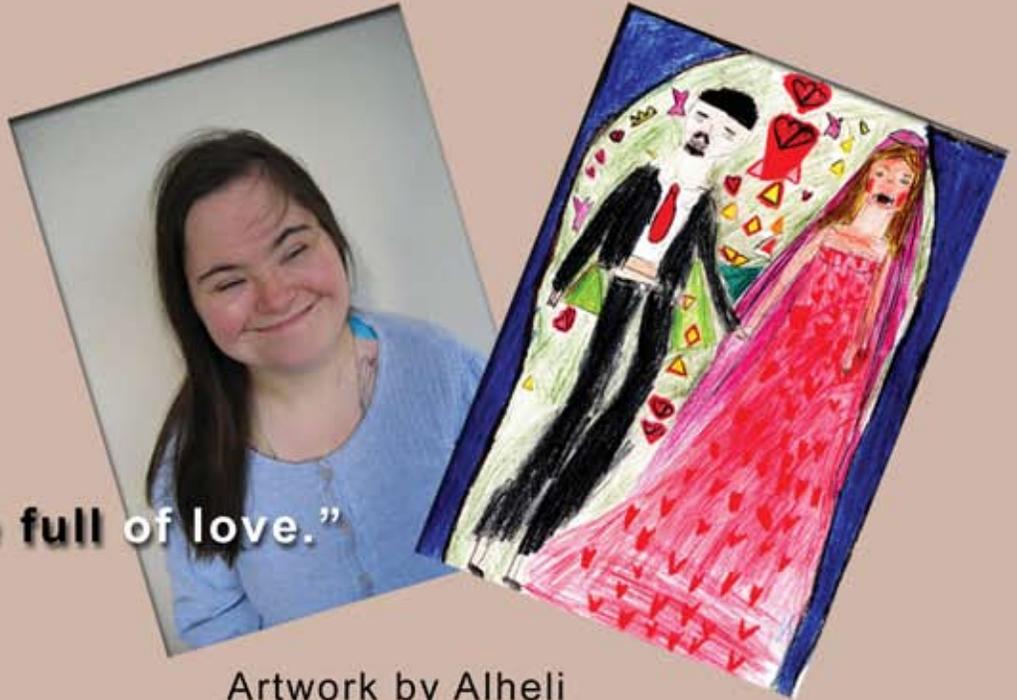
From Alheli Carles and Shane Conroy



"I want to get married and I still want to be an artist and an actress. I want to move around to different cities to live. I want to help people out there who need my help. Someday I want to visit my father in Paraguay. I am very friendly, caring, joyful, and beautiful..."

my future will be full of love."

-Alheli Carles



Artwork by Alheli



"I want to be a rock star.

I want to sing and travel. I want also to do drumming when I am a rock star. I will get married to my girlfriend. I want to get an engagement ring so I can ask my girlfriend to marry me. I want to have a garden and plant lots of flowers at my apartment. I want to move out and live with my girlfriend. I want to go out to dinner a lot. I love to cook and want to be a chef. Love comes true and I hope that all of my dreams come true."

-Shane Conroy

An Invitation

From Sam Acebo

"In the summer of 2004 I found myself poor and jobless. I had zero work options and my financial problems were overwhelming. I was forced to check the local newspaper's want ads. I came across one that caught my eye. It was a care provider position for a teenager in a wheelchair. I called and was invited to meet Ben at the health club where he was swimming. I didn't feel comfortable at all.

"I think fear was telling me why I should turn around and go home. I forced myself to think rationally. After calming my negative thoughts about the job I realized that everything in my life was falling perfectly in place and I couldn't ignore it out of fear. I decided to take the job.

"It was extremely difficult at first. Things that needed to be done for Ben slowly became easy for me. The job transformed for me when Ben's mom said we could take him on trips. She said we were in charge of planning and doing everything involved.

"I went from being paid to keep Ben alive to being paid to help him live.

"In that I must say I got a sense of purpose and the ideas for what we could do just flowed out of me. We

have gone to Disneyland, Las Vegas, a Sum 41 concert, tubing on the lake a number of times, camping at the beach, to Great America, a water park in Redding, and our most recent adventure has been a trip to the sand dunes in Oregon. This last trip was awesome!

"That dune buggy was so fun, but the problem was you either were punching the gas and going very fast or you were stuck in the sand. So Ben and I were flying around these dunes at around 40 miles per hour having a blast. No casualties and we had fun.

"The biggest change I have seen has been in me. It sounds bad because basically I had taken the job because of the flexible schedule and the fact that it was a job, but along the way I know I have grown a great deal and to that I owe Ben. People are always so surprised when I tell them what I do. They always look to me like I am a unique person.

"I believe that the ability to do this type of work is not only in certain people.

"It cannot be learned but it must be discovered."

“I went from being paid to keep Ben alive to being paid to help him live.”



Sam and Ben at the dunes



Sam building Ben's house

An Invitation

Lauri Evans



Lauri is the Support Services Coordinator at California State University at Chico Department of Disability Support Services and working toward her Masters Degree.

Lauri coordinates the accommodations of students with disabilities so they can be successful in college. "Those accommodations don't guarantee a student's success; that is up to them," comments Lauri.

It was March of 2006 that Lauri was reunited with her brother, Danny. Lauri had not seen Danny in nearly twenty years. He had been living all those years at Sonoma Developmental Center, a state-run institution, with hundreds of other people with developmental disabilities.

It all started twenty years ago when Lauri made her first and only visit to Danny at Sonoma. She was pregnant with her first child. "When Danny was little, he was a very cute little kid. I played with him. But, when I saw Danny at Sonoma—saw him grown—I saw what his life was like and I became terrified."

Lauri was terrified because her family's genetic condition became very real to her. It was tough to think that the baby she was carrying could have the same condition.

Lauri made an emotional decision to spend energy on her own family. "I put Danny in a little box high up on a shelf. Every now and then I looked at the box, thought about him, and walked away," said Lauri.

One day Lauri received a call from Sarah. Sarah is a professional who knows how to provide supports for people with disabilities in their own homes. Sarah said to Lauri, "What do you think about springing your brother?"

Lauri was stunned, anxious and nervous. The little box she had put in the closet so many years ago was now square in her lap. "I never told anyone about Danny."

It took more than a year to plan Danny's move back to the town he had known as a child. Life is not the same living in an institution as it is living in a home—a regular house in a regular neighborhood.



Upon Danny's arrival to his new house, Lauri was there waiting. She helped him out of the car, walked him up to the door and said, "Danny this is your new house." Danny turned to Lauri and "gave me the biggest hug. It felt like he was saying, 'Thanks for getting me out of there.'"

That evening when Lauri was ready to leave, Danny was taking his first bath in his new home. Lauri knocked on the door. The staff that worked at his house came out and closed the door behind them to afford Danny his privacy. "It blew me away, he was being treated so respectfully, even though I am blind and could not see him. They respect him there at his new home." Lauri feels that Danny knows this too. "Being blind gives us a purer understanding of the world," reflects Lauri.

It's common knowledge around town that Danny is free after all these years, thanks to the efforts and careful planning of the staff at Sonoma, Danny's family, and people like Sarah. "I am really proud to be Danny's sister. I feel like a movie star or something. Everywhere we go, I run into people who ask, "Are you Danny's sister!?"

"I feel like a rock star." ❖



"What do you think about springing your brother?"

An Invitation

Michelle Erstad



Michelle was little more than two years old when her mom told her another baby was on the way. She could hardly wait for someone to play with.

From the time she was four, Michelle was eager to be a part of her brother's care and was able to put his contact lenses in and take them out. She had witnessed dozens of her little brother's seizures and waves of paramedics storming the house on a biweekly basis—she even saved his life a few times.

When she was five, Michelle's mom called her from the Pediatric ICU, and with profound sadness she had to tell her, "Michelle, your little brother probably will not be coming home again."

"Mom, you tell him I said he has to!!"

Her brother came home.

Michelle trained her brother's shelter dog, Bob, to be his Therapy Dog. Bob could visit him in the hospital where he often had to stay.

Michelle never let her brother's wheelchair prevent him from enjoying any aspect of life: She even insisted that he go with her hiking up a steep hill one rainy day. Hiking up the hill wasn't so bad; however coming back down was a bit hair-raising.

Michelle's said, "I'm never doing that again!"

For nearly seventeen years, Michelle carried her brother from place to place. Her physical strength grew commensurately with his weight.

"He ain't heavy, he's my brother."

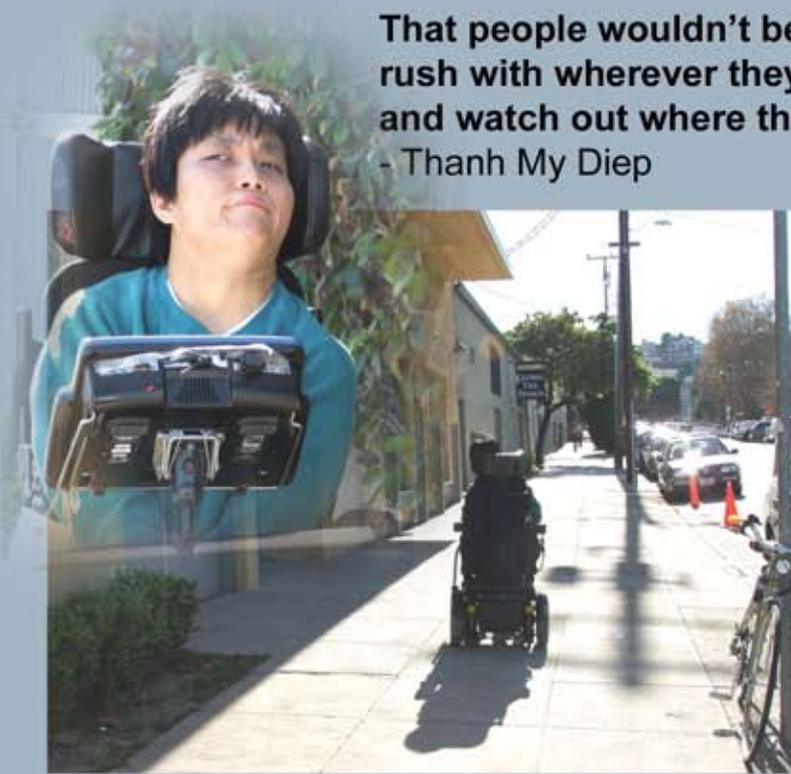
Whenever she is in public with her brother and can feel the stares across a room, she leans over and gives him a kiss.

"I love you little bro." That says it all. ❖

What are your hopes for your community?

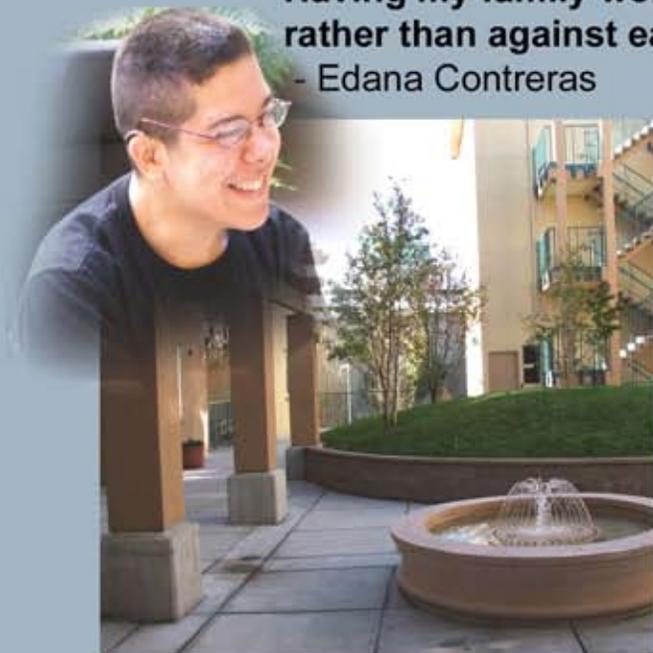
That people wouldn't be in so much of a rush with wherever they have to go, and watch out where they are going.

- Thanh My Diep



Having my family work together rather than against each other.

- Edana Contreras



That we protect each other instead of compete.

- Gigi Kruse-Silva

A Little History

History's Trag

by Terry Kozloff

Little more than thirty years ago, children with disabilities had no legal right to receive a public education, and families were encouraged to institutionalize their children. Since, there has been tremendous social change.

In 1970 Nancy Gardner was young and civil rights minded. She was looking for a cause when she went to work for Eastern Nebraska Community Office of Retardation (ENCOR) based out of Omaha. ENCOR, had a vision that regardless of the severity of a disability, children could learn skills necessary to live in their communities. "ENCOR is where I got my first exposure to people with developmental disabilities and it was an opportunity to use the passion I had as a teenager to make a difference," said Gardner.



Nancy Gardner in the early 70s



Behavior Shaping Unit, Omaha

Gardner, a college student at the time, was hired to teach and live with eight of the most severely behaviorally challenged adolescents with mental retardation. Gardner lived with the children, ages six to sixteen, in the basement of a sprawling converted old house in a middle class neighborhood. It was an experiment called the Behavior Shaping Unit.

Gardner's first assignment was to accompany her supervisor to an institution known as Beatrice State Home. From more than 2,000 people, they selected eight children with the most profound disabilities and self-injurious abusive behaviors to participate in the program.

edy and Hope

Bart, ten years old, was one of the first children that would go home with Gardner. He had lived the majority of his life in Beatrice where the staff restrained him to keep him from banging his head. Even when Bart arrived to his new home, where he was no longer restrained, he would sit as if he were.

"We got him a helmet so he wouldn't hurt himself, and made it fun for him to have the helmet off," said Gardner, "Over time we saw significant decreases in self-abuse."



Terri on far right

Terri was fifteen years old when she came to live and learn at the Behavior Shaping Unit. Terri's teeth were rotten and she had pulled out her eyelashes and her hair.

"She looked awful," said Gardner. I remember her so distinctly, she would kneel on all fours and make grunting noises and sometimes scream like a wild animal. I was afraid of her at first."

"We got her dentures, a wig and taught her how to wear clothes. She turned into quite a little young lady."

Thirty years later, Gardner became the Executive Director of North Bay Regional Center (NBRC). She retired as the Executive Director in 2007.

NBRC supports more than 6,500 people with developmental disabilities in Napa, Solano and Sonoma

A Little History

History's Tragedy and Hope

counties. NBRC is one of twenty-one regional centers located throughout California serving and supporting more than 220,000 people and their families living in communities everywhere. "I never imagined my cause as a teenager would lead me here," said Gardner.

Today, people living in California's state-run institutions (known today as developmental centers) can be seen participating and contributing to their communities. People in developmental centers are no longer limited as they once were, nor are they unseen or unheard by the world around them.

NBRC works closely with California's remaining five developmental centers, where more than 2,800 people with developmental disabilities are living. They work as a team, designing, and innovating possibilities of community living in regular neighborhoods regardless of the severity of a disability, "one person at a time."

It has been a long journey and there is still a long road ahead.



The Parent Movement

Edna

by Terry Kozloff

Edna Dahl passed away in May of 2003. She was 96. She was not famous and most people in her own community did not recognize her name when they saw it in the paper. Many of the people who once worked with, respected and admired her are now gone themselves. Edna's memorial service was unassuming and her passing received ordinary coverage in local papers. There was nothing on TV to memorialize her life's accomplishments.

Edna was not ordinary.

What motivated Edna's life and the journey she was on came simply from an inherent desire to do right by her son, Norman. She was not unlike millions of mothers everywhere. What she wanted was ordinary but what she had to do to get there was extraordinary.



A Little History

Edna

Five decades ago, public education was not available to her nine-year old son. Public policy had no expectations for Norman's future. His disability was the reason for his exclusion and he was labeled "uneducable." But his mother disagreed, and that counted for a lot.

So she founded her own school.

While Edna wasn't sure where she was going with this new school, she did have her intuition, her faith in Norman and a few bucks. On January 1, 1954, Edna's first entry in the bookkeeping ledger of the school she helped to found shows a deposit of \$12.25. That's all.

Edna did not blame society and its attitudes for the lot her family was destined to bear, she asked society to join her in her journey. When she was told, "No, it can't be done" or "That won't work", she did it anyway.

Edna's intuition became what is known today as the Alpha Resource Center of Santa Barbara. It supports hundreds of adults and children with developmental disabilities and their families as included members of their communities.



Santa Barbara NewsPress--November 1, 1954. On behalf of the Santa Barbara Council for Retarded Children (today the Alpha Resource Center of Santa Barbara), Edna accepts a donation for \$100.00 from the Junior Women's Club.



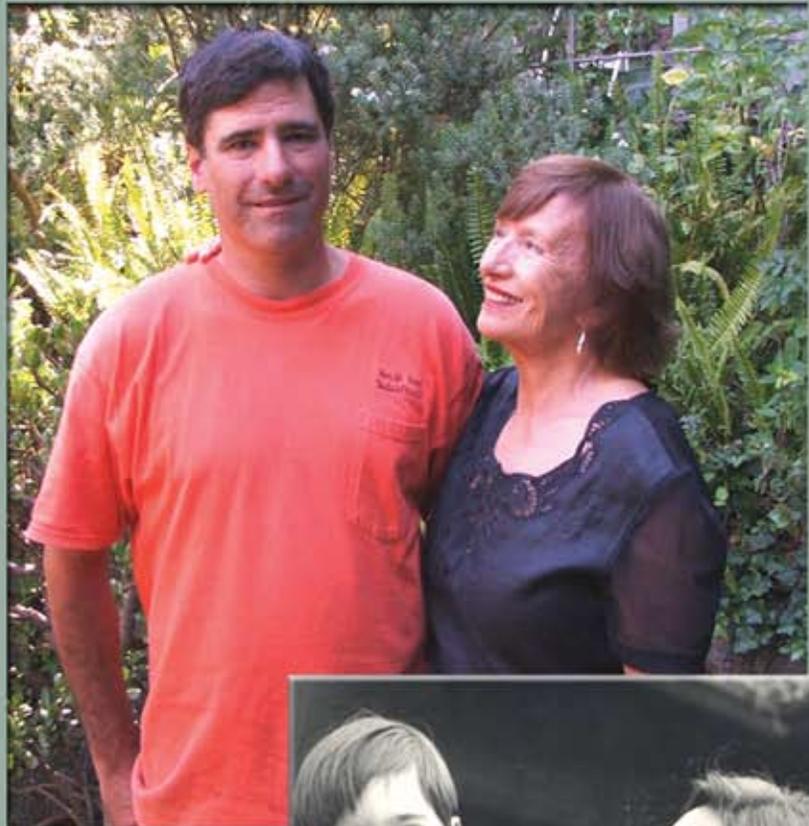
Santa Barbara NewsPress--October 20, 1955. On behalf of the Santa Barbara Council for Retarded Children (today the Alpha Resource Center of Santa Barbara) Edna accepts a donation for \$256.00 from the Hemliners Sewing Circle.

Helen

by Nancy Lin

Helen Rossini, wanting to learn as much as she could about her own son's disabilities, took a part-time position at Garden Sullivan Hospital (now California Pacific). She could see the parents sitting in the waiting room while their children received treatment or therapy. She could sense their anxiety and feelings of being alone because she had been there, too, with her own son. In those days, the early 1970s, there was no such thing as a support group, so Helen started inviting these stressed parents into her office to talk or just sit with her while they waited – and not just one or two of the most anxious parents, but all of them and all at the same time.

It was at these informal groupings in Helen's office where the parents found others who shared their fears and issues. They started meeting regularly in other locations and, as time went on, these sessions were opened to any parent who needed support – regardless of their child's disability.



Helen and Miguel Rossini
Past and Present

The Artistry of
Miguel Rossini can be seen on page 59

A Little History

The Parent Movement

Helen

Helen Rossini is still passionate about support groups. For Helen, the impact of a support group is so much more powerful than working with people one on one. She likens it to “dropping pebbles in a stream.” Like ripples of water, the impact grows wider and wider as people go on to share the resources they have gained and set up their own circles of support. This is truly evident in the example of a generous woman, who opened up her office to anxious parents like herself. That gesture of friendship and support has evolved over the years into the organization now known as Support for Families of Children with Disabilities.

Support for Families continues to support over 500 families every year with its Parent Mentor Program, while offering workshops, trainings, and clinics to professionals and families in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Helen Rossini officially retired in 2000 but she continued to lead two support groups, one for parents of children with autism and the other known simply as “The Tuesday Night Group” for parents of young children, up until April of 2007. She is still very involved and is eager to continue her good work.

It was the parents who brought to California the only Civil Rights Act this nation can claim for people with developmental disabilities known as The Lanterman Act.



A Little History

The Lanterman Act

California is the only state in the nation with a Civil Rights Act for People with Developmental Disabilities

by
Terry Kozloff

The Lanterman Act which passed into law in the early 1970s. It is the result of the collective efforts, hearts and minds of many who brought down the old system of only institutional care and forged a new system that supports people with developmental disabilities as contributing members of the community.

The Lanterman Act is the result of the Parent Movement, within which parents organized and cornered policymakers in hallways and elevators. These parents did not just demand their children's rights, but expected help in creating legislation that protected them.

The Lanterman Act is a result of visionary professionals like Nancy Gardner (History's Tragedy and Hope); and the hearts of legendary legislators like Frank D. Lanterman willing to face public scrutiny to take up a cause worth fighting for.



Assemblyman Frank D. Lanterman



Frank Lanterman with Governor Ronald Reagan

"Photos courtesy of the Department of Developmental Services, Office of Legislation and Communications"

Section 4501 of the Lanterman Act states: *"The State of California accepts a responsibility for persons with developmental disabilities and an obligation to them which it must discharge. Affecting hundreds of thousands of children and adults directly, and having an important impact on the lives of their families, neighbors and whole communities, developmental disabilities present social, medical, economic and legal problems of extreme importance."* ❖

Lives Not So Ordinary

by Terry Kozloff

Ted and Susan are individuals and a team. Ted and Susan love life and are an example to the rest of us.



When I interview and write about people it is because I know there is something I can learn from them. Otherwise, my writing would have no soul.

With what Ted and Susan Hess shared with me during our interview, their lives would sound so **ordinary** to someone that did not know them. But, there is nothing ordinary about them at all.

Ted and Susan have been married for 14 years, have dreams of buying a home of their own, “because I’m tired of hearing the guy upstairs walking around,” commented Ted.

The couple wants to work for as long as they are physically able, and spoke quite a bit about their love for their cat, Samson. “Samson is like our child and he is part of our happiness,” said Susan.

Ted works at the ARC of Butte County Thrift Store in Chico where he writes prices and sizes on tags of donated clothing and helps keep the store looking sharp. “I help earn money to pay our bills and stuff.”

Susan has worked at the **Rowell Family Empowerment Center** in Chico as a receptionist for twelve years—Susan is the first person a caller talks to, and the first person a visitor to the office sees. “I’m learning how to speak Spanish,” commented Susan. “I want to be able to communicate better with Spanish speaking families.”

Ted wants to take better care of his health by reducing his graham cracker intake, exercising more, taking his medicine on time, and regularly monitoring his blood sugar.

Susan enjoys hosting parties in her home, socializing with people, and likes to read. “Ted and I try to read the Bible every morning before we begin the day,” said Susan.

So, what is extraordinary about Ted and Susan?

Both Ted and Susan have *disabilities*. However, their disability enables those of us who observe them from afar, are their friends, or those of us who support them in their daily lives to ponder our own lives and how we support one another.

Susan’s gait can be unstable—so Ted carries her backpack and holds Susan’s hand. Susan has trouble adjusting the straps on her shoes—so Ted straps them for her. Ted forgets which bus he needs to take to get to where he is supposed to go—so Susan makes all the transportation arrangements. Susan has trouble getting her hearing aids adjusted just right—so Ted does it for her. Ted forgets to eat—so Susan reminds him.

Ted and Susan “stand up for people.” They encourage and support people with disabilities who are often marginalized, to assert their rights as human beings.

Ted stands up for Susan if a stranger throws cross or insulting words at her. On at least one occasion, Ted did get a little too close to the perpetrator of insulting words toward Susan. *I suggested that maybe he should stand outside arms reach of the other guy next time.*

“We do a lot of praying,” said Ted. “My neighbor has had a bad back and I put my hand on his back and prayed for him. God is the center of our lives.”

Ted and Susan are an example to the rest of us.





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“I Am Somebody:” Beyond Inclusion



by Thomas E. Pomeranz, Ed.D.
President and CEO of
Universal LifeStiles
Indianapolis, IN

One evening while viewing a broadcast on public television, chronicling the civil rights movement in the United States, I saw a television documentary of the now famous speech given by Dr. Jesse Jackson on December 25, 1971. (The date that Operation PUSH was founded).

The proclamation exclaimed by Jesse Jackson and chanted in cadence by his audience reverberated loudly in my ears: "I AM SOMEBODY!" Frequently woven throughout Dr. Jackson's speech was the affirmation to the African-American community — I am somebody. This imperative inspiring African-Americans to recognize who they are and their inherent value as human beings captured the imaginations and the spirits not only of African-Americans, but many who heard the celebrative message.

At the time I heard that broadcast of Dr. Jackson's speech, I was immersed in a project to develop an assessment instrument to measure the Quality of Life of people with intellectual disabilities. As I poured over my stack of papers, reflecting upon my efforts, I realized upon hearing Dr. Jackson's message, that I was missing the spirit, the very essence of what I was attempting to assess.



“I am somebody” connotes that one has a sense of self and that the individual sees himself/herself as a valued person—who has much to share and contribute.

Thomas E. Pomeranz



As an experienced professional, I had made sure that I identified the many qualities that I could observe as indicators of a quality life, e.g. privacy, self-determination, relationships, etc. Until I heard Dr. Jackson's speech it never crossed my mind that a higher order condition must prevail if one is to experience a quality life.

As an experienced professional, I had made sure that I identified the many qualities that I could observe as indicators of a quality life, e.g. privacy, self-determination, relationships, etc. Until I heard Dr. Jackson's speech it never crossed my mind that a higher order condition must prevail if one is to experience a quality life.

It is only recently that I truly began to understand and appreciate the “universality” of Dr. Jackson's message of “I am somebody.” That apparently simple, though not simplistic, statement caused me considerable consternation as I attempted to relate Dr. Jackson's message to the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. Certainly the implication of being somebody reaches far beyond the goal of providing integrated and participatory activities. As professionals, we set our sites on supporting people with intellectual disabilities to be members of their communities while forming meaningful and valued relationships with others. As grand as these ideals are, the message of “I am somebody” transcends the expectations of the principles of inclusion.

“I Am Somebody:” Beyond Inclusion

“I am somebody” connotes that one has a sense of self and that the individual sees himself/ herself as a valued person—who has much to share and contribute. One learns (grows to understand) that he or she is somebody through the array of positive interactions experienced with others. Interactions with others nurture and support one’s sense of inherent value as a human being.

People with intellectual disabilities are often the subject of interactions which communicate that they are valued not for who they are, but rather what they do. Relationships for people with intellectual disabilities far too often tend not to be reciprocal, but rather directive, coercive, and patronizing – sometimes referred to as “services”. Frequently the significant others (usually paid staff) in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities interact contingently—contingent upon the individual behaving in ways desired by others.

Contingent social interactions serve to communicate that people are valued for their compliance to meet demands and expectations versus a relationship based upon an attraction or a sense of appreciation for one’s presence or natural gifts brought to the relationship. When individuals are related to in this fashion, *it is not likely that the individual will learn to view him or herself as a valued person*. A belief that “I am somebody” will remain elusive.

Our society is colored by a compelling desire for its members to achieve excellence. This compulsion for excellence, found in athletics and business, has resulted in a society which reveres competence. People who aspire to and meet our expectations for competence are highly respected and rewarded. They are revered. The nature of intellectual disabilities (major impairment in adaptive behavior) is antithetical to our expectation of competence. Our societal predilection for persons with competence can result in feelings of rejection and non-acceptance for persons with intellectual disabilities. Such feelings of being rebuffed for a lack of competence can erode one’s sense of self, further distancing the individual from embracing a belief that “I am somebody.”





As staff and significant others in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, we must relate (behave) to those we support in a way that encourages a sense of self and the forming of a foundation which will promote the belief that they are somebody. Given the conditions which impair the recognition that one is a valued human being, the following actions should be considered in supporting individuals in their quest to be somebody.

- 1. Seize opportunities for making introductions that will lead to the formation of new relationships.**
- 2. Support the expression of affection through appropriate smiles and touches.**
- 3. Celebrate special events in the person's life, including their accomplishments.**
- 4. Interact with the person in non-task oriented ways.**
- 5. Promote opportunities for the individual to give and do for others.**
- 6. Share your expressions of feeling such as joy, anger, and disappointment through appropriate modeling.**
- 7. Promote frequent laughter, indicating the presence of a sense of humor and happiness.**
- 8. Provide the individual the opportunity to participate in activities that say "I belong," such as church membership, joining neighborhood watch groups, and serving on boards.**
- 9. Relate in courteous and kind ways.**
- 10. Listen to what people are saying is important to them.**

We as clinicians and managers must be exemplars of all these actions that support those we serve in realizing their dream of being somebody. Through our example we will inspire and excite those around us to promote healthy and positive interactions with others and ultimately the feeling that "I AM SOMEBODY."

Readers wishing to discuss or comment on this article are encouraged to contact Thomas E. Pomeranz, Ed.D, President of Universal LifeStiles LLC, 8126 Wellsbrook Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46278; 317.871.2092 voice, 317.871.2096fax, tpomer@aol.com, www.universallifestiles.com. ❖



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a Documentary by Robert Arnold



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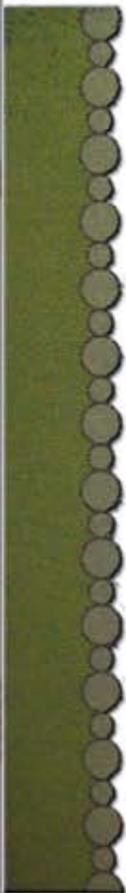
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ROBERT FEISE

A SCULPTOR, PAINTER, WRITER AND ADVENTUROUS TRAVELER

Visit Robert's website at <http://www.robertfeise.com>



Robert Feise is a 76-year-old wild man. He's a sculptor, a painter, a bon vivant, a lover of beautiful women, an athlete, a dancer, an adventurous traveler, an integral member of a nude street performance troupe, a man of deep religious faith and a writer.

Some of Robert's greatest pleasures are in mixing it up with other people, in throwing himself headlong into the forces of nature, and in seeing the hand of God in the affairs of men. These pleasures shine through the writings of his adventures and experiences.

He has never been able to walk, talk, dress, or feed himself.



Photography by Debbie Moore

When Robert is in painting class at Creative Growth, he sits in his wheelchair and uses a paint brush that has an extension on the handle about five feet long.



A Tree
40"x50"
Acrylic on canvas



Jesus
36" tall
Wood sculpture



Sunset on Water II
40"x35"
Collage of computer printout



Beach at Waikiki
50"x40"
Acrylic on canvas



Three Daisies
30"x24" Acrylic on canvas

ROBERT FEISE

Continued



Photo by Debbie Moore

"As I sit in my chair and reach down with my long long paint brush I pretend that I have extra long arms as I reach down and paint my thoughts on canvas."

"I try my best to paint as perfect as I can because I feel like my paintings are expressions and extensions of me."

"Painting is also another way for me to communicate because I can paint what I can't say with words."



Brown Dog
24"x36" Acrylic on canvas

"I feel so moved because when I leave this world I want to leave something behind for people to remember me. So I'm going to keep improving on my painting until I make my painting my legacy."

-Robert Feise



Sunset on Water

36"x24"

Acrylic on canvas

Continued

40

ROBERT FEISE

IN HIS OWN WORDS AND ART

The following three pages are a collection of short stories by Robert of his experiences from his early to more recent years.



Aunt Alta and Robert

MOMMA AUNT ALTA

I was born on April 6, 1931. My mother had a very difficult time giving birth to me.

For the first eighteen months my mother didn't notice very much wrong with me. I seemed to be a pretty average baby. Soon after, my mother noticed that I was having a hard time swallowing food and liquids and I didn't have the body movement of a baby my age. My physical condition continued to worsen as the months passed.

At the age of five, I was in such a horrible physical condition that my mother gave up and handed me over to her unmarried aunt to raise. I'll never forget the day I was riding to my new home with my new mother. As she drove, she had one hand on the steering wheel and her other arm was around me gently squeezing me against her warm body.

She took her eyes off the road for a few seconds and glanced down at me and smiled then said in a babyish tone of voice, "Hey sweetie... do you know that you're Momma Aunt Alta's little boy now and she loves you very, very much."



Yellow Dog 36"x24" Acrylic on canvas

THE HEALING TONGUE OF LOVE

It was a sunny late spring day in 1937. I was sitting on my knees beside a big fish pond watching the goldfish. I had a little Pekinese

THE HEALING TONGUE OF LOVE

dog named Neejee and he was lying next to me. I felt so peaceful and content. I would put my hand in the water and the fish came right up to my hand.

It startled me when Neejee suddenly jumped into the water with a big splash. Neejee swam toward an object in the center of the pond. I couldn't see what it was, but he picked up something with his mouth, then turned around and swam back. When Neejee came closer, I could see that he was carrying a dead bird in his mouth.

On the shore, Neejee gently laid the dead, stiff bird on the grass. He got down on his stomach and maneuvered the bird between his two front paws, so tenderly and lovingly. He started to lick the bird.

Neejee relentlessly licked and eventually the bird's feet started to move slightly. The movements got stronger and stronger, until the bird was kicking its legs. The bird flipped itself up on its feet, briskly shook its feathers, and cocked its head at Neejee as if to thank him. Then it took off and disappeared in the sky.

This proved to me, that even a dog can heal, if it has enough faith and love. If we had enough faith and love, we could work miracles like Jesus.

IKIE, the Magpie

Feeling warm feathers of pure love brush against my cheek

by Robert L. Feise

1952

I consider this the sweetest love story ever told.

The story begins on a hot day in August 1952. I was living with my Great Aunt Alta. There was a knock on the door, and a friend and her little girl walked in, carrying two tiny baby birds. The mother said, "Bob, these two baby birds fell out of the nest. We don't know how to take care of the baby birds, so we brought them to you."

Using only the arrow keys on his keyboard, Robert uses his artistry to commemorate his beloved bird, IKIE.



ROBERT FEISE

IKIE

1952

How do you keep baby birds warm without the mother bird? You put them on a heating pad, turn it to medium warm, then cover the babies with a thin cloth.

How in the heck do you feed baby birds without the mother bird? By dipping your finger in a mixture of bread and milk, holding your finger over the gaping beaks, and letting the mixture drip down the baby birds' throat.

One of the baby birds wasn't very active, and wasn't able to eat, no matter how hard I tried to feed it. I was sad to see it get weaker each day, until it finally died. But I was very happy that I had one healthy strong growing baby bird. I named him Ikie.

Ikie had the run of the house, and he'd follow me all around like a shadow. No matter where I went, I'd look behind me, and see that little ball of feathers come hopping toward me.

I kept Ikie in the house until he was full grown. I decided it was time to let my beloved bird have its freedom. After some coaxing, he finally hopped down the back steps and onto the big back lawn. Ikie seemed to enjoy his new freedom, because he danced and hopped all over the back yard.

But will Ikie come back to me?

A few minutes later, I was startled by a loud flapping sound, a sudden rush of wind hitting my face, and a feeling of sharp little claws digging into my shoulder. At that moment I was overcome with emotion feeling Ikie's warm soft silky feathers of love brush against my cheek.

For many days to follow, and no matter where Ikie was whether it was in the top branches of a tall tree, or perched on top of a telephone pole, he'd fly down and land on my shoulder.

Sometimes he'd have a pebble or a bright red little berry in his beak. He would lean his head down and drop whatever he had into my shirt pocket.

Even after all these years, Ikie is still alive in my heart.

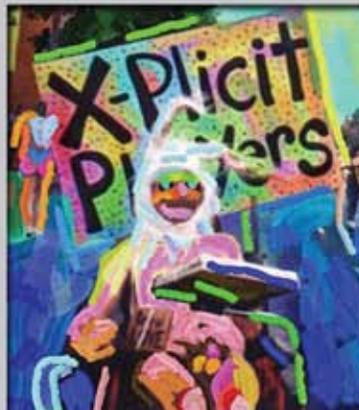


Self Portrait (5 canvases)
48"x180"
Acrylic on canvas

ON BEING a NUDIST

Human beings certainly are creatures of habit. That wouldn't be so bad if we all would honor each other's right to do his or her own thing without judging or condemning. Human nature seems quick to point a finger at somebody who strays away from the traditional rules of society. I have a conviction that we can do whatever we want to do, as long as it's not harmful to ourselves or anybody else.

Ever since I was a little boy I loved going naked. It feels good to expose my entire skin to sunshine and fresh air. Unfortunately it's against the law to go naked in public. As a child, my aunt would quite often let me play naked in her fenced yard. I would also crawl around in the house, wearing nothing but a happy smile.



*Painting of Robert by
Debbie Moore*

Robert is wearing only rabbit ears in the 1998 "How Berkeley Can You Be?" Parade and Festival

ROBERT FEISE

Visit Robert's website at <http://www.robertfeise.com>

HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY?



Robert



Debbie

Robert and his good friend and attendant, Debbie Moore

DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND

Have I told you lately just how much I care for you?

Have I told you lately just how often I think about you?

Have I told you lately that you're always in my heart and prayers?

Have I told you lately just how much you mean to me?

Have I told you lately how wonderful your friendship is to me?

Have I told you lately that the thought of you always brightens my day?

Well, my beloved friend I'm telling you now.

From The Bottom of my heart.



411 Optimistic Way

The Move in to Supported Living
By Kelly McSpadden



I was 24 years old when I moved into my own place on April 18th, 2011, and it was exciting. I was anxious about how I would get along with the staff, how they would get along with me, and how they would handle the situations I need help with. I was also nervous about how well the staff and I would get along as the months passed by.

While I was excited, I also missed my parents and brother and sister. But, I knew my mom lived only two minutes away, and that she would be able to come over whenever she wanted to and was not busy. The move also made me feel like my relationships with my parents would become distant over time.



However, our relationships are improving as time passes. We go on trips, like when we went to see my sister graduate college at UCSB. I enjoy seeing my dad play softball, and after the games we always hang out. Also, I always invite my family over to play games, whenever they aren't busy.

We are making new, great memories together.

The staff and I are also getting along better as the months go by, and I feel supported by them in having my needs met.

My favorite thing about living on my own is that I get to watch T.V. whenever I feel like it. I get my own space to be me and nobody can bug me. And my sister and brother can't yell at me. The relationships that I have with my siblings are getting WAY better. We are more like brothers and sisters now where as before, my sister acted like my mom when she wasn't supposed to be.

My friendships are also getting better, because I used to have to ask my mom first before they came over, and now I don't have to. Things are now flip-flopped: my mom and my dad have to ask before they can over. I can invite my friends over whenever I want to.

All of these changes are making me feel like I can be myself again, and it's making me realize that I am a happy person and can make my own decisions, including about whom I have relationships with. I also feel ecstatic about the future because I see myself having a family of my own. This big change is teaching me self-control and to not make impulsive decisions. For example, the ten CDs I bought at once as an early birthday present to myself wasn't such a good idea.





Kathryn Papaleo

President of the Religion and Spirituality Division
American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
www.aaidreligion.org

A Variety of Gifts

I barely take note any more when I enter this church. There is a ramp, large print hymnals, and assisted hearing devices. There is a sign language interpreter next to the pulpit and places for members who use wheelchairs to sit with family or friends. If these things weren't there, then I would notice.

Michelle is a lector here and Joe sings in the choir. Dan greets people at the door of the church and hands out the program. They wanted to do those things and with a little help from individuals in the congregation, and some extra time for practice, they are able to do so. Though each has a diagnosis that has been used throughout their lives to identify them, here in this place, in church, it is immaterial. There are no assessments or evaluations required to share in the abundant love of God and in the fellowship of those who come together to celebrate their faith. Everyone is welcome here, even when the silence is interrupted, the singing a tad off-key and the celebrant surprised with an unexpected response to a rhetorical question in the sermon.

I haven't really been in this church yet, but when I do enter it, I will surely notice! This is the church envisioned by the National Council of Churches (NCC) and the U.S Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB). In documents dating back more than twenty years, these religious groups called for full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of church life. Even before the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, churches acknowledged that barriers, physical and attitudinal, had prevented inclusion and needed to be removed. Then would the heart of the Scriptures be revealed in these gathering places.



There are no assessments or evaluations required to share in the abundant love of God and in the fellowship of those who come together to celebrate their faith.

Physical accommodations, such as ramps, curb cuts, rails, and automatic doors, are the first sign of welcome to people with disabilities and their families, and they are by far the easiest to accomplish. The more difficult goal is to persuade congregations to allow full participation by people with disabilities after they have crossed the church threshold, acknowledging gifts and talents, as well as needs for adaptation. If a church community can do that, then the whole congregation is brought closer to God.

Religious organizations and advocates committed to including all people regardless of disability in the life of the church have prepared resources to assist congregations in welcoming children and adults with disabilities into the faith community. All that is needed is the willingness to do it.

The realization of a church that welcomes every one who seeks God can happen. More than that, it is imperative.

"There is a variety of gifts in the Church, but always the same Spirit. There are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord, working in all sorts of different ways and different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them." ❖

(Dimensions of Faith and Congregational Ministries with Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families, published by The Boggs Center, New Jersey).

An Interview with



Shoshana Brand

by Janet Dehring

Q. What is Blue Rose Videos?

Shoshana – *It's my small business for blind and visually impaired people. They can browse my website and rent movies.*

Q. What inspired you to create Blue Rose Videos?

Shoshana – *When I was small, my parents would describe movies and videos for me. When I grew up I thought it would be great to be able to rent just descriptive videos, instead of having to buy them.*

Q. How did you come up with the name, Blue Rose Videos?

Shoshana – *The blue rose is not a common rose, and descriptive video rental is not common or easy to find.*

Q. How do people find out about Blue Rose Videos?

Shoshana – *Through word-of-mouth and agencies for the blind.*

Q. What are some of your most popular video rentals?

Shoshana – *Ray, Chicago, Cold Mountain, To Kill a Mockingbird, and Harry Potter.*

Q. What are your plans for the future of Blue Rose Videos?

Shoshana – *I would like to add the option of DVD rentals. ❖*

For more information about Blue Rose Videos please contact Shoshana Brand at www.BlueRoseVideos.com.



Blue Rose Videos
Videos With A Voice

Something that needs to be said, Out Loud!

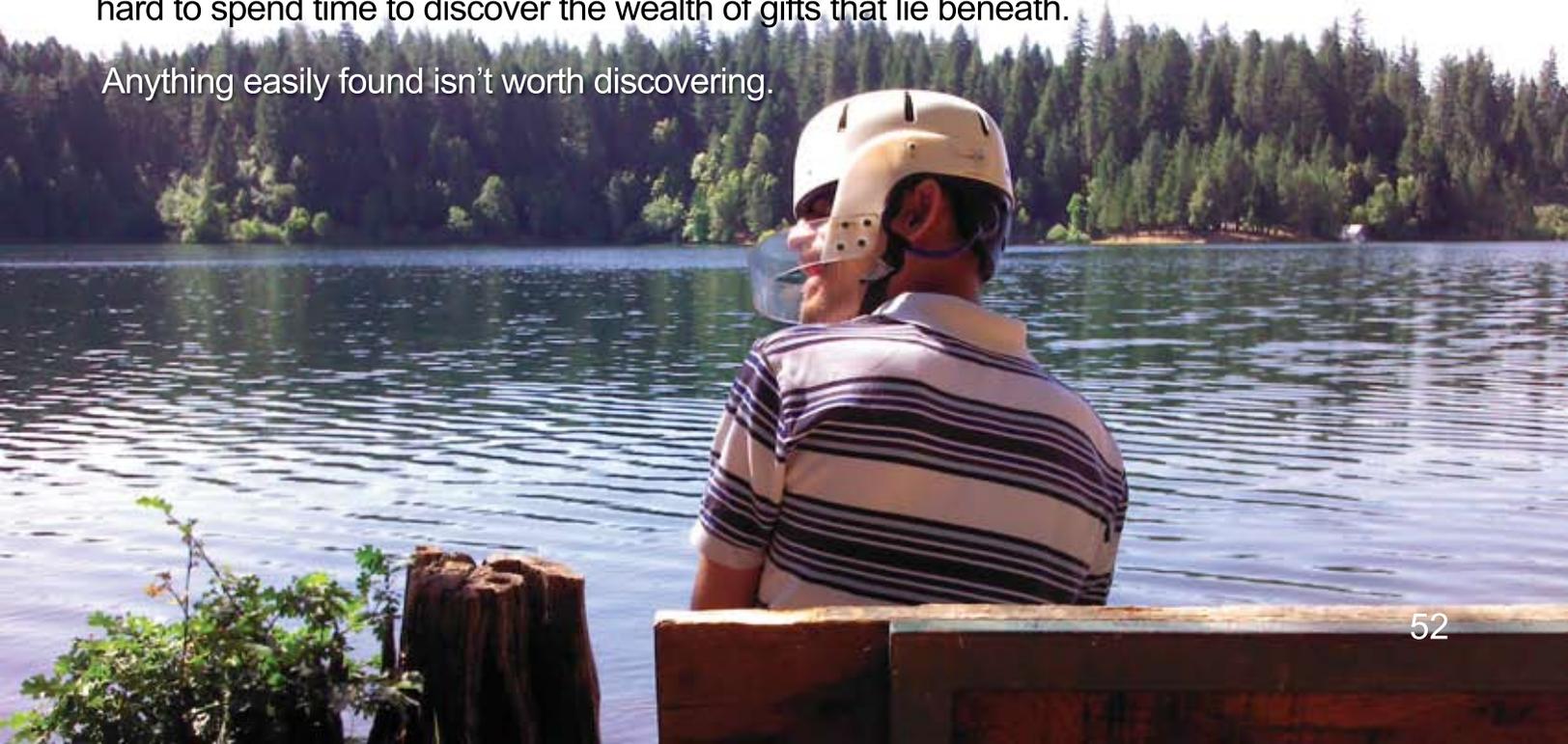
Editorial by Terry Kozloff
Domenic Console

It is either something people think about and won't say out loud because the political consequences are frightening and the risk vs. benefit deemed too great; or it is something never thought about at all. Either way, we as a society find reasons to look the other way.

It continues to be disheartening to be close observers over many years of what adults with disabilities have available to them in their home community in the name of "doing something meaningful." It is disheartening to know that for many people and programs the spirit of "inclusion," and "integration," amount to nothing much more than sorting through garbage in the name of "recycling;" driving around for endless hours in a company van sitting in the third bench seat from the front with no social interactions, adults coloring in a child's coloring book picked up for a \$1 at the Dollar Store to pass time, wandering in large buildings with dozens of other people without shoes and without a jacket on a cold day; and most certainly a person's dignity is lost and forgotten when day after day they are fed by a person whose efforts seem cold while wearing plastic disposable gloves, never speaking, never asking if the food they are putting in another's mouth is appealing—no wonder the plate goes flying across the floor.

Somehow it is easy to not know, to look the other way, to unwittingly marginalize people—but hard to delve into the soul of people whose speech is impaired, whose physical abilities include pushing their wheelchair, or whose IQ does not meet society's standards. It's too hard to spend time to discover the wealth of gifts that lie beneath.

Anything easily found isn't worth discovering.



Commentary

What's Disability?

By Steve Kozloff



I never really thought about the term “disability,” before I met and married Terry. Her teenage son's body has few abilities. Being an engineer and a person whose life has been filled with “extreme” kinds of sports and lifestyles, from hang gliding and paragliding to multi-month long motorcycle road trips; disability and I have seldom crossed paths.

The word disability is described in the dictionary as an *affliction, drawback, inability, defect,* and so on. When I met Terry she described her son as a teacher. I wondered, who was this woman and what does she mean?

The world has defined disability and its definition has little to do with the person themselves, yet it has everything to do with how the person is perceived by others. The circles I travel have expanded since living with Terry, I have come to know and meet people with fewer abilities, that are nice, driven, smart, loving, mean, attractive, unattractive, and athletic—all by choice. Those characteristics can be and are found in people of every nationality, race, and culture; regardless of how many abilities they have...

“Don't stare” and “don't ask” are common orders from parents to their curious children. I say, “Why not?” We are each other's teachers and the world's definitions must be changed and can be, only if the people that are the make-up of the world would ask.

I have heard people say that having a disability is like being cheated. Unfortunately, disability is quantified as a negative—I suggest a person should be quantified by what they do with their abilities. It could be as simple as a smile—something Terry's son offers us everyday. Or it could be as complex as what Stephen Hawking offers in his scientific brilliance.

We should all ask ourselves, “Do I do the most with what I have?”

People only have abilities, the quantity varies. ❖





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www.theandycampbell.com

Bridging Cultures

An Interview with *David Lau*

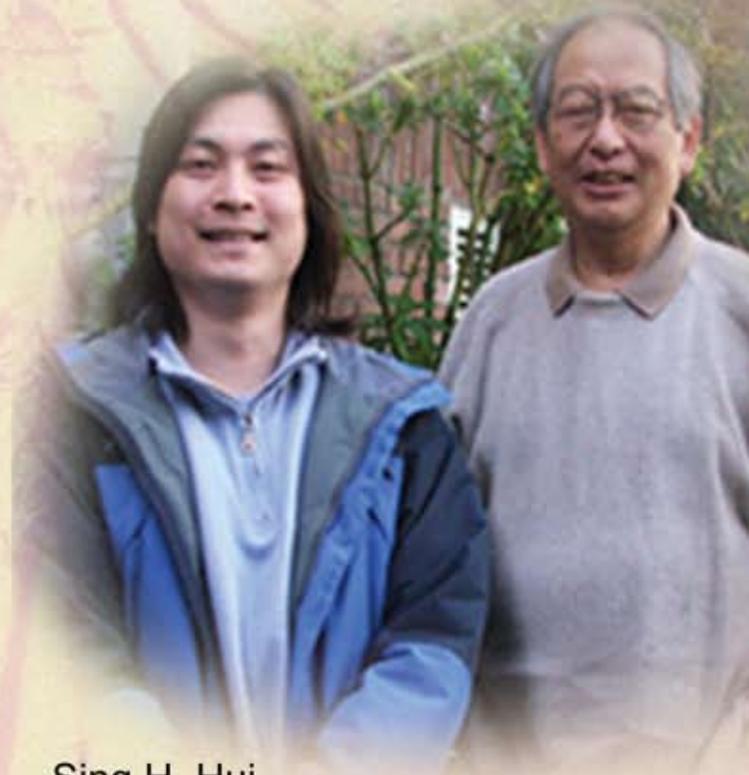
by Tara Knutson

In the heart of the Richmond District, in beautiful and busy San Francisco, lies a diamond in the rough. Inside a historical church is Opportunity Unlimited, a day program serving developmentally disabled adults. Like other day programs, some people are on their way to outings, others engaged in group activities, a group is cooking in the kitchen - I can feel the excitement of anticipation.

The Richmond District is heavily populated with Chinese-Americans, as is this day program. In my conversation with Mr. David Lau, the program director, I get a closer look at our culture in San Francisco. It becomes apparent that the challenges this day program faces develop into strengths. Mr. Lau started out at Opportunity Unlimited many years ago as an instructor. He eloquently speaks to his experiences helping to guide the direction of his program, while the people he serves determine the shape it takes.

When I asked Mr. Lau to tell me what makes his program unique, he explains that many of the people only speak Chinese and come from monolingual families. Chinese culture is very family oriented, and close knit. Many of the parents have immigrated from China. Although Mr. Lau is Chinese and can overcome the language barrier, it still can take years for him to gain a parent's trust. The goal of Opportunity Unlimited is to help people be as independent as possible and to help the family, in turn, understand independence.

Community outings, employment, and travel training are basic services expected of day programs. Yet, Mr. Lau has learned he cannot expect the families he works with to be ready (initially) to enroll their children in these services. While most parents are protective of their family, Mr. Lau sees that the families he works with are even more so due to a gap between cultures.



Sing H. Hui.
Assistant to David Lau

“Fear can overwhelm parents”



David Lau

“Fear can overwhelm parents,” says Lau. Fear of the larger community, fear that a more independent child means loss of control, and fear of not being a responsible parent (by giving space or letting go to allow independence) are all legitimate, real issues Mr. Lau experiences when working with families.

Getting parents “on board” with teaching their children how to travel independently within their own community, is an especially delicate process. One client was pulled out of Opportunity Unlimited and day services all together because the family was too afraid and couldn’t come to terms with the level of independence Opportunity Unlimited was aiming for.

The work of Mr. Lau is two-fold, to teach independent living skills to the people he serves and to teach the families that their children can learn to be independent. Actually, the work is tri-fold. When they go on outings they too are educating the community at large that they are capable individuals like everyone else! Mr. Lau says even in China Town, people stare at them, “but we stare right back!” he says.

Mr. Lau has had many success stories on the path to teaching people to become more independent. He tells a story of a “very keen, intelligent person, but also fearful and held back.” Mr. Lau saw the potential in Carl who was used to having everything done for him. He began to arrange situations where Carl would be leading his peer group in some way and used Carl’s favorite thing, coffee, as a motivator.

Bridging Cultures

As Carl's confidence grew, Mr. Lau would drive him home and stop the van two blocks from his house. Mr. Lau challenged Carl to walk the two blocks home as he watched on. Two blocks eventually became four and Carl realized he himself could do some things on his own. Over time, Carl agreed to try and learn how to travel from place to place on his own. His mother was very hesitant but also agreed to give it a try.

With support, Carl learned to take public transportation to and from Opportunity Unlimited. He really enjoyed his new found independence and a whole new world opened up to him. He began to learn new bus routes in the city. Remember his love for coffee? In those days, banks typically had free coffee. He began to travel from bank to bank for the free coffee and, eventually, all around the city to enjoy its delights.

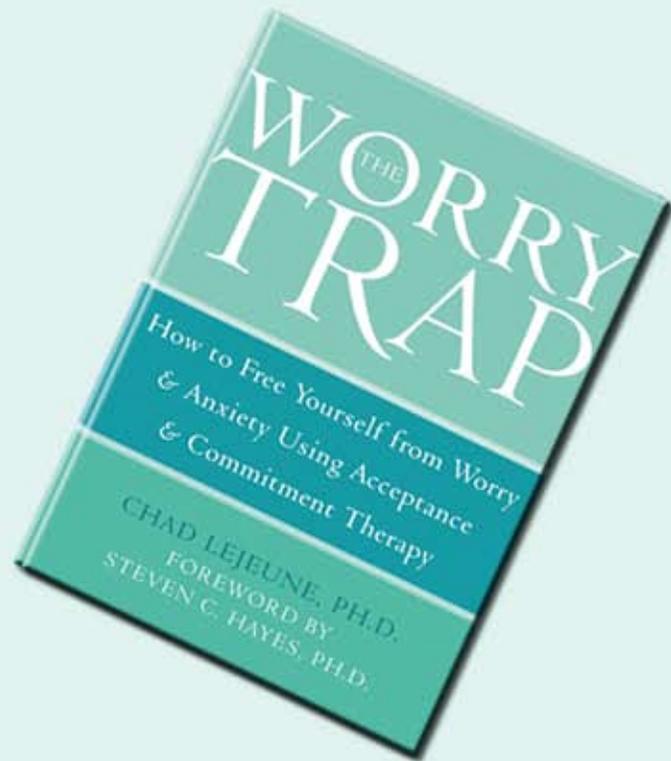
The universe works in mysterious ways and, in this case, timing was of the essence. Carl's mother fell ill and needed assistance with things she used to do for her son. Grocery shopping was one major way Carl could assist his mother (and himself) because of his progress. He realized he could do things like everyone else, and he did!

There are many ways to learn about others and ourselves. When we do, we begin to trust, become open to new experiences, and live a fuller life. Experience can shape who we are and who we become. If we have something to offer or teach someone, it is important to respect where a person "is at," remember that change takes time, and keep an open-ended invitation. The wisdom of David Lau is bridging a small piece of a larger community's cultures. ❖





Chad LeJeune
author



WORRY ... a lack of tolerance for life's uncertainty, traps you in the "what if" of tomorrow, robbing you of the "what is" of today.

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--Jeffrey Brantley, MD, director of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program at Duke University and author of *Calming Your Anxious Mind*

The Artistry of Miguel Rossini



Miguel Rossini describing his artwork in his studio.



Exhibits include

- 1996 Sebastopol Center for the Arts
First Place Cash Award and Honorable Mention
- 1992 Marin County Fair, Marin Civic Center, San Rafael
Second Place Cash Award and Honorable Mention
- 1997 Performing Arts Center, Vallejo
- 2001 Borders Book Store, San Rafael
- 1995 Bradford Gallery, San Anselmo
- 1996 Fort Mason Center, San Francisco
- 1993 Marin Arts Council Show, Corte Madera

B.A. in Art, Chico State University 1990



Miguel Rossini lives in a small one bedroom, studio apartment that also serves as his art studio. Through the large bay window, he has a panoramic view of the quiet and green Mill Valley. Miguel speaks passionately about his art and what inspires him to create beautiful scenes. One at a time, he proudly points out each piece he displays on the walls of his home, and with his mind's eye recalls who and what inspired him.

As with all talented people, occasionally creative blocks interrupt the flow of artistry. "When that happens, I still paint even if I don't like what I have created." It's as if he is finding, searching, and rediscovering his heart again.

Miguel has exhibited his artwork in numerous art shows in and around the Bay Area. His dream is to find a way to earn a living creating and selling his art, which can seel for as much as \$700.00. "I would really love that," said Miguel with a half smile and a beam in his eye. "I really would." ❖



Your Right, Your Voice, Your Vote!

By Natalie Valencia
Mains'l Services 7th St. Centre for the Arts
and Theatre in the Now, Chico, CA



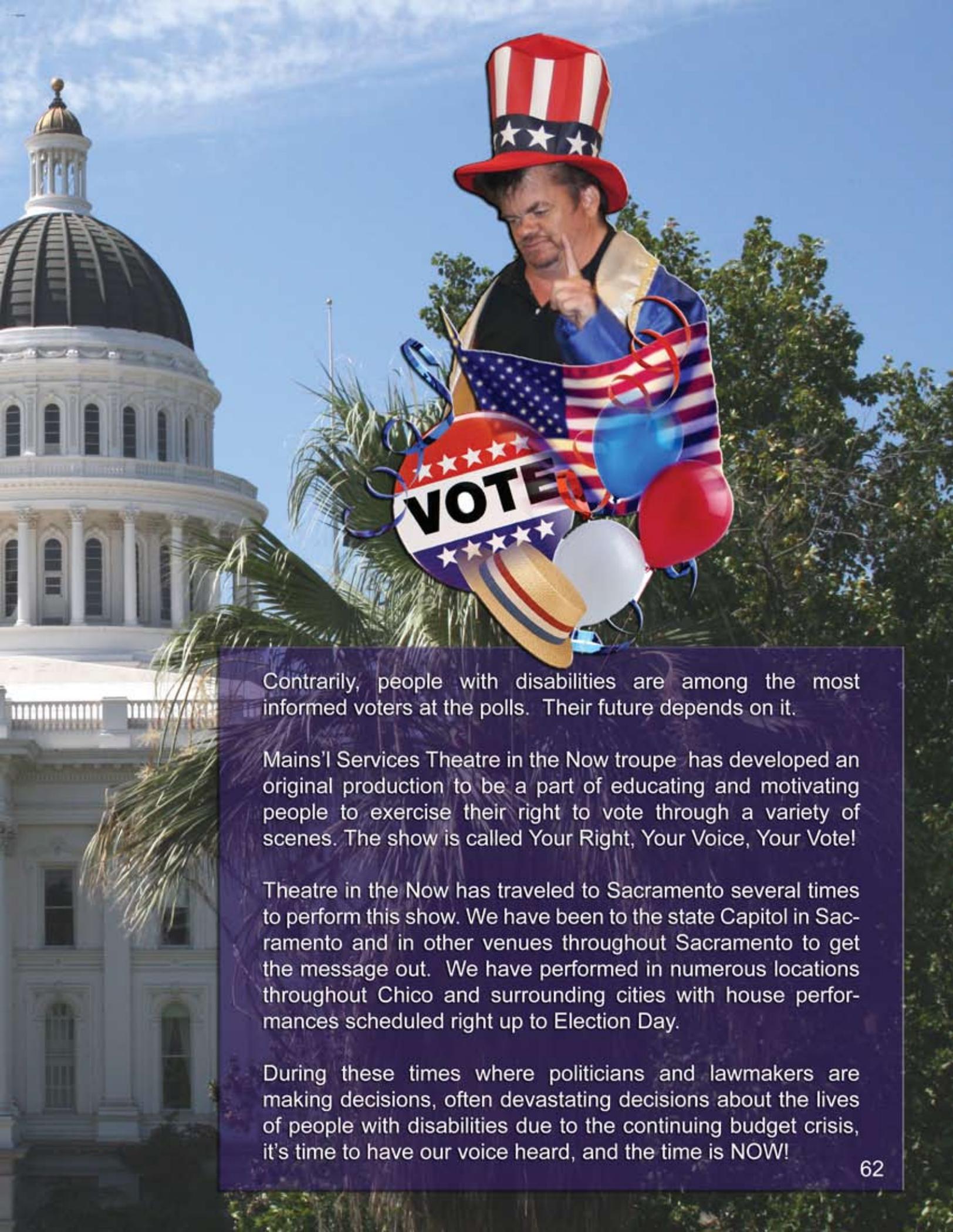
As you know, 2012 is an election year and over 150 million American citizens are allowed to vote. Unfortunately, many don't and give up their right to do so. Did you know that voter registration rates are lower among minority groups?

Among the minority groups are people with disabilities.

This is why there is a state-wide movement happening right now to increase these numbers and make history by having a huge surge of voter registration and Election Day votes by people with disabilities!

It's important to keep in mind that our voting history in this country was very discriminatory. At one time, only white, land owning men were allowed to vote. That's a pretty scary thought and while many of you may not agree with each other on the issues we face, or with the politicians we have representing us, this is the only system we've got. If a person chooses not to vote, someone else will and what matters to you may not be what matters to another voter.

Women's suffrage was achieved gradually state by state during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Still, there remains a discouraging disenfranchisement of people with disabilities in accessing polling locations, and while there have been admirable and important legislative attempts to increase accessibility—still there remains a prejudice that people with some disabilities are unable or not capable of casting an informed vote.



Contrarily, people with disabilities are among the most informed voters at the polls. Their future depends on it.

Mains'l Services Theatre in the Now troupe has developed an original production to be a part of educating and motivating people to exercise their right to vote through a variety of scenes. The show is called Your Right, Your Voice, Your Vote!

Theatre in the Now has traveled to Sacramento several times to perform this show. We have been to the state Capitol in Sacramento and in other venues throughout Sacramento to get the message out. We have performed in numerous locations throughout Chico and surrounding cities with house performances scheduled right up to Election Day.

During these times where politicians and lawmakers are making decisions, often devastating decisions about the lives of people with disabilities due to the continuing budget crisis, it's time to have our voice heard, and the time is NOW!



CELEBRATING
DIVERSITY AND
INCLUSION
THROUGH FILM

FEATURED FILMS

I Am

*How can we
better the world?*

Rett: There is Hope

*Exploring Rett Syndrome
Q&A w/ Director*

Ingelore

*Being deaf & Jewish
during WWII.*

Dolphin Boy

*Brain injured boy
& dolphin therapy.*

Raising Renee

*Promises, relationships,
& sisterly love*

Austin Unbound

*A deaf man's experience
of being transgender
Q&A w/ director & star*

Embraceable

*Taking a look at
Williams syndrome*

Strong Love

*Couple with Down
syndrome marry
Q&A with stars*

In A Dream

*Eccentric artist creates
50,000 sq. ft. of mosaic art*

Waste Land

*Creating photographic images
out of garbage in Brazil*

Willowbrook

*Controversial experiments on
people with disabilities*

Kids with Cameras

*Children with autism
at a film camp
Q&A w/ director & star*

Lucky

*A famous artist experiences
a life altering accident*

...that's me!

*Profiling success,
self-advocacy, and inclusion
Q&A w/ cast & crew*

Stop, Look and Listen! Walk!

*Pedestrian safety
Q&A w/ cast & crew*

Coming Out

A son reveals his secret

Los Ojos de Brahim

A blind young African's story

Open Your Eyes

*11 year old asks
"what is normal?"*

Portrait of Isabelle

*Girl from Mt. Shasta
with Rett Syndrome
Q&A w/ director*

Ronan's Escape

*A young boy is
bullied at school
Q&A w/ director*

The Big Picture: Rethinking Dyslexia

A new look at dyslexia

**Screening
Schedule &
TICKETS**

Available at:

FOCUSFilmFestCalifornia.com

or Colusa Hall on Friday & Saturday Oct. 12 & 13

THURSDAY OCT. 11th

Sierra Nevada Big Room *Kick-off*

Kick off this year's festival in the Big Room as we screen *Raising Renee*, a film about promises, relationships and sisterly love. Music starts off the evening at 6:30 p.m.

\$5 tickets at Little Red Hen's Nursery, Kids & Kitchen, and Gift Shop
or online at FOCUSFilmFestCalifornia.com

FRIDAY & SATURDAY OCT. 12th & 13th

Colusa Hall, CSU Chico *9:30 a.m. - 9 p.m.*

- 26 films in multiple theaters
- Photography & video exhibit
- Q&A's with visiting directors and stars
- Short Film Competition screening
- Reception: meet the Short Film Competition winning directors
- Book & poster signings

\$5/ session

\$15 One Day Pass General

\$10 One Day Pass Disability/Student

\$25 Two Day Pass General

\$15 Two Day Pass Disability/Student



OCTOBER 11-13
CHICO, CALIFORNIA | 2012
8TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL

THURS: BIG ROOM, SIERRA NEVEDA
FRI & SAT: COLUSA HALL, CSU CHICO

FOCUSFilmFestCalifornia.com



AMJaMB Supported Living Services and Beyond Inclusion Day Services strive to be examples of how people with disabilities can be and are a part of the natural course of life. AMJaMB is about giving, quality of life, self-esteem, and being appreciated for one's presence in the world in which we all live.

AMJaMB grew from the hearts of its co-owners, Domenic Console and Terry Kozloff—each of them a parent of a child with disabilities. Domenic's son Michael, has autism; Terry's son Ben, is deaf-blind, and quadriplegic.

Every letter and color in "AMJaMB" represents the love and respect Domenic and Terry have for all of their children and their uniqueness. Before entering the office, they glance at the sign on their office door and reaffirm AMJaMB's philosophy that every person is as much a natural part of the human experience as **A**nthony, **M**ichael, **J**oseph, and **M**ichelle and **B**en are.



Ben is not a victim of his blindness; he can see things those of us with eyes cannot. Ben is not bound to his wheelchair; it gives him freedom.



Michael's autism is not who he is; it's a perspective he has.

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Please visit our website at amjamb.com

