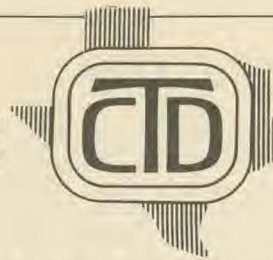


COALITION OF TEXANS WITH DISABILITIES



Summer 1985

NEWSLETTER

THE 69TH LEGISLATURE — WHERE WE STAND

By Judy Wingard-Westbrook

As a result of the positive legislation passed by the 69th Legislature, disabled Texans have many reasons to celebrate after this hectic, frantic legislative session concluded its business. After several close calls and many forecasts of "gloom and doom" due to the state's budget crunch, the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities' Legislative Platform fared well in the hands of the Texas Legislators.

First, in the area of Community—Based Programs and Other State Agencies' Services, the disabled population obtained several victories such as the funding for attendant care under the Department of Human Resources and the passage of Senate Bill 940 sponsored by Texas ARC.

In the eleventh hour of the 69th Legislature, the House and Senate Conference Committee voted to fund the development of the Shared Attendant Programs through the Department of Human Resources. As a result of the efforts of many of CTD's members and member organizations who wrote letters, made phone calls, visited their Representatives and Senators and monitored the legislation way into the wee hours of the night and the active support of the DHR Board and staff for the attendant care issue, funding finally came about. The Texas Legislature appropriated 1.1 million dollars in the state General Revenue funds for one year of the biennium and allocated 1.1 million dollars to be transferred to the attendant care programs from other DHR funds. In this tight budgetary minded Legislature CTD, its members, and other persons involved in this effort should be very proud of this success story. Congratulations and many thanks to those individuals who worked in this effort.

The funding for the Community Care for the Aged and Disabled under the Department of Human Resources remained at the 1985 level of funding. Although one may think this is a cut when one considers the inflationary factor, other programs in state agencies received more drastic cuts than just remaining at the same level.

With the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, CTD and the disabled community had a close call when the Legislature almost cut the funding for the Governor's Committee for the Disabled Persons out of TRC's budget. Fortunately, due to the strong grass roots efforts of the disabled community, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) kept the same '85 level of funding for '86 and '87 in the vocational rehabilitation program and other programs including the Governor's Committee for the Disabled Persons. The Legislature also gave the Commission the discretion to move \$1

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Open range and a modern metropolis share the landscape in the Panhandle of Texas. Rising from prairies that were an untamed frontier less than a century ago, the city of Amarillo still retains the flavor of the Old West.

AMARILLO HOSTS EIGHTH ANNUAL CTD DELEGATE CONVENTION

THE Coalition of Texans with Disabilities will hold its eighth annual Delegate Convention in Amarillo, Texas at the Sheraton Hotel on September 27-29. The theme of this year's convention is Leadership Development.

The welcoming speaker is Dr. Frank Bowe, Communication Barriers Specialist from the Architectural Barriers Transportation Compliance Board. An early leader in the disability rights movement, Dr. Bowe will discuss the history and progress made by disability rights advocates.

On Saturday morning, Shel Trapp from the National Training and Information Center in Chicago, IL, will present a workshop on "Organizing to Lead" while a representative from Southwestern Bell in El Paso will present a workshop on "Leadership-Accessing the Media." In the afternoon Wade Blank, National Coordinator of American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT) will discuss "Civil Disobedience-Does it Work?" While Dr. Frank Bowe will discuss "Leadership Skills and Techniques". An evening banquet will feature the awards presentations and entertainment.

On Sunday, delegates to the Convention will consider resolutions and elect members to the CTD Board of Directors. The key to the success of the Delegate Convention is your participation. Make your plans now to attend an interesting informative and exciting Delegate Convention in Amarillo. For more information contact the CTD Central office, 512/443-8252.

million from the vocational rehabilitation program to a category of Comprehensive Medical Services which will assist those persons without insurance who have just recently received spinal cord injuries and/or head injuries. In addition, the Deaf/Blind Program was transferred from the Commission for the Deaf to the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Finally, the demographic study which TRC put into its budget was cut out at the Committee level.

Unlike the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, both the Texas Commission for the Deaf and the Texas Commission for the Blind had their existence threatened when the Legislators proposed that both agencies go under the mandated legislation continuing the establishment of TRC as a state agency. Again, the Legislators listened to the grass roots efforts of the disabled community who opposed this move to combine the three agencies into one agency. The three agencies are still separate agencies, but the Blind and Deaf Commissions both received substantial cuts in their programs.

The Commission on Human Rights did not fare as well as the above mentioned Commissions. As a result, this Commission will be primarily operating on federal funds and complaints of discrimination involving disabled persons will be handled by the state Commission on a limited basis.

Finally, the 69th Legislature did approve the Texas Department of Mental Health-Mental Retardation budget to allow 50% in '86 and 75% in '87 for the expansion of community services to the mentally retarded population. Other major programs under TDMHMR for persons with mental retardation were spared the budget cuts that other state agencies and program experienced.

As a result of the hard work of the Association for Retarded Citizens/Texas, a zoning bill (SB 940), which was also supported by CTD and its members, passed the 69th Legislature. This bill prohibits zoning against small group homes of disabled persons in residential neighborhoods. Congratulations, ARC/Texas! A job well done!

Other bills supported by the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, such as the gas station bill which allows disabled drivers to purchase gas from full-service pumps at self-service prices and the local measured service (LMS) bill which would have postponed charging for local calls until 1990, died in Committees. Depending on the wishes of CTD's members, this unfinished business may become issues CTD wishes to pursue in the 70th Legislature.

The 69th Legislature also passed the following legislation affecting the disabled community which was not in CTD's Legislative Platform but which CTD supported: 1) Indigent Health Care Bill, 2) Baseline Banking Bill (referred to interim study committee) 3) Bill allowing motorcycles to have disabled parking stickers, and 4) Bills to prevent discrimination against the disabled in auto insurance and provide better outreach with insurance information.

In closing this report, I would like to take a moment to thank each and every one of you who wrote letters, called and or visited his or her Representative and /or Senator in order to achieve the victories we have obtained. I especially would like to recognize the members of the CTD Legislative Committee who spent many hours in meetings and hearings as well as appearing before the Legislative Committee Hearings—sometimes way into the night!



INDIGENT HEALTH CARE BILL FINALLY PASSED

LESS than two hours after the 69th Texas Legislature officially ended at midnight May 27, Governor Mark White called the first Special Session of the Legislature to convene at 10:00 am on May 28. The main reason for the Special Session was because HB 1843, the key county responsibility bill in the Indigent Health Care package, and the one which provided funding for the other indigent health bills, was not able to be considered for a final vote by the House before the midnight adjournment of the 140-day legislative session.

As dazed spectators filed out of the House gallery, media reporters began an intensive effort to find out what would happen to this final bill in the indigent health care package. Members of the Mexican-American Caucus in the House immediately went to meet with Governor White to ask him to call a special session for the unfinished bill. At 1:50 a.m. on May 28, the Governor issued his call for the Special Session. Shortly after 10:00 a.m. the Senate introduced and approved SB 1, which contained the same language as the House/Senate Conference Committee report on HB 1843.

SB 1 then went to the House, which held a hearing on it at 1:00 p.m. in the House Public Health Committee. At 3:30 p.m. the Committee reported the bill out with no changes. The bill was considered on the House floor on May 29. A number of amendments were approved, and the bill finally passed the House around 5 p.m. The Senate gave its final approval at 9 a.m., May 30, and sent the bill to the Governor.

The bill is no longer funded by the cigarette tax. Instead, \$70 million has been identified from various funding sources to finance the legislation. The cigarette tax financing mechanism was removed when the Governor made it clear that he would veto the bill if it contained this or any other tax.

\$25.25 million of the \$70 million will go to four programs in the Texas Department of Human Resources (TDHR); \$37.75 million will go to five programs in the Texas Department of Health (TDH); and the remaining

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CTD EDITORS' NOTE

The CTD Newsletter is edited and published quarterly by the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, a state-wide cross disability consumer group. Any member who wishes to submit future articles for publication should send them to:

Judy Wingard-Westbrook CTD
and P.O. Box 4709
Jean Langendorf, Co-Editors Austin, TX 78765

The Following are publication dates and deadlines for submitting articles:

Fall Newsletter Aug. 25, 1985



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Marshall Mitchell

THE Eighth Annual Convention is just around the corner. The Program promises to be informative and productive for all participants. The theme for this year's Convention is Leadership Development. For several years the disability rights movement has been led by a relatively small number of disabled individuals—pioneers, learning by trial and error, seeking ways to most effectively instigate positive change for disabled citizens.

Most of these leaders pursued improvements on their own, at first, while searching for fellow advocates to join their cause. They were not "schooled" in diplomacy and how to negotiate for change. No one "commissioned" them as leaders and bestowed appropriate knowledge upon them to carry out their mission. They simply saw and experienced real, practical problems. They were experiencing subtle, many times unintentional, discrimination as they attempted to obtain an education, hold down a job, find a place to live, or pursue life as do other American citizens.

This inequality of opportunity to be a "normal" citizen spurred them to find ways to make longterm, meaningful changes. Not everything they tried worked. Probably most of their attempts failed. But they learned from their mistakes, and are still learning.

One of the key points which they have learned is that **NUMBERS COUNT**. They also found that leadership qualities are not inherited or absorbed, but are learned. Most of these leaders learned the hard way and are insistent that there is a more productive, easier way to learn to lead. And, they learned that new faces, voices, and bodies are needed for progress to continue.

At the CTD Eighth Annual Convention in Amarillo, you will be the beneficiary of many of those hard earned lessons. All of the program will be centered around effective leadership. Our keynote address will be presented by one of the first national leaders of the disability rights movement, Dr. Frank Bowe. He was the first Executive Director of the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. His leadership of this first Coalition of disabled citizens has enabled us all to band together and become an effective voice. The success of CTD can be partially credited to ACCD's early influence and progress.

Dr. Bowe's leadership will continue for centuries through his books *Handicapping America* and *Rehabilitating America*. His writings have helped to educate America about the needs and abilities of disabled citizens.

Dr. Bowe is only the "icing on the cake". September 27-29 is the time and the Amarillo Sheraton is the place to be a part of the lessons of the past, leadership of the future, and business of the present! Don't miss this incredible opportunity! Be sure and register early.

See you in Amarillo for a Convention to remember!!

SPOTLIGHT ON VISTA

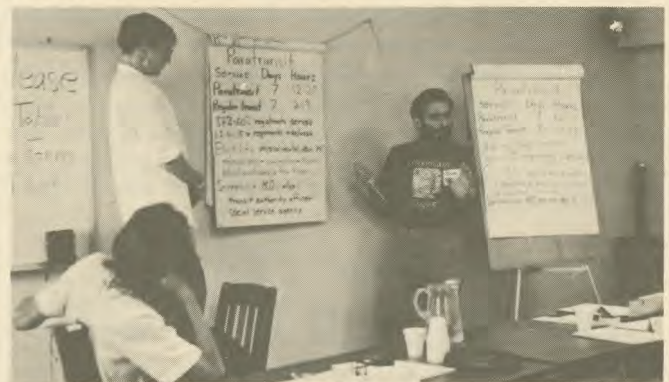


DAVID DiElsi served as a CTD VISTA Volunteer from April 1984 to May 1985. During his year of service, David took full responsibility for setting up the computer donated to the CTD Central Office which advanced our capabilities to better serve our members. He developed an organized system for membership records; providing the tools for an effective outreach program which has doubled CTD's membership.

David provided training and technical assistance to the staff and Board of Directors of CTD. He shared his skills and knowledge with all of us. A presentation on fundraising techniques, an organized election and resolution system for the Delegate Convention, assistance with the CTD Jog-Rama, and the development, implementation and presentation of the CTD Nationwide Transportation Survey were all part of David's assistance to CTD over the past year.

Besides the many hours devoted to CTD, David also served as the State VISTA Forum representative working with the State ACTION office and the VISTA Volunteers across the state. He "volunteered" his resonant voice to read at the public radio station KUT-FM and those of us in Austin enjoy his friendly presentations on the Sunday morning "Sound Sight" Program. In his 'spare' time you could find Dave on the volleyball court, running through Austin or listening to some jazz.

David has been an exceptional worker, always ready to assist in the accomplishment of any task. He possesses a unique combination of task orientation and commitment to the persons with whom he is working. We will miss him at CTD and we wish him success in his future endeavors.



David DiElsi presents the Results of the CTD Transit Survey at the CTD Transportation Workshop.

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CTD Board members meet with Business Leaders from across the State.

CTD BUSINESS LEADERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS

by Larry Johnson

TOP executives from ten major Texas corporations listened to the CTD story on Friday, May 17th at the Austin Marriott for the first CTD Business Leaders Advisory Committee meeting. The executives' reaction can best be described as a mixture of admiration and amazement. Comments were voices again and again that "CTD had a very impressive set of accomplishments" and that we needed to let more people know about our organization. This very positive response is a genuine tribute to the fine job done by the presenters and participants from the CTD Board members and staff.

The morning portion of the day-long agenda featured comprehensive informational presentations by Pres. Marshall Mitchell, Board members Stephanie Thomas and Larry Johnson, CTD Executive Director Jean Langendorf and VISTA Volunteer Sharon Gardner. Topics discussed included the history of CTD, our information network, legislative involvement, voter education and registration, the CTD Consumer Access Award program, training and technical assistance and, of course, our statewide Vista program.

The afternoon session, which was conducted by Board member Lee Kitchens, focused in on CTD's specific goals and objectives, self-funding alternatives and the concept of bilateral assistance, i.e., what CTD can do for private business, and what private business can do for CTD.

A good beginning was made toward communicating our message that "the well-being and independence of disabled people can directly benefit the economic prosperity of society" and that private sector involvement, with material resources and professional expertise can contribute significantly toward the optimal achievement of this goal.

WHEELCHAIR COURSE AT AMARILLO FUNFEST

By Kaye Branigan

A GOOD time was had by all at Amarillo Funfest, 1985. It was the first year for the Amarillo Disabled Individuals In Action (ADIA) Wheelchair Obstacle Course at Funfest. The public benefited from the obstacle course by becoming aware of disabilities and the barriers associated with them. Those who participated by accepting the challenge of performing the course were able to experience the use of a wheelchair for the first time. Children and young people returned again and again to repeat the course.

Although this event was not "profitable" monetarily, it did provide the opportunity for members of ADIA to explain the purposes of the organization to interested persons. Another plus to the wheelchair obstacle course was that ADIA was the only disability group at Funfest managed by the disabled themselves for people to meet and made ourselves highly visible to the public eye as people with a cause.

ATTENDANT CARE TASK FORCE — IN FULL SWING

by Bob Kafka

ATTENDANT Care is an issue that has recently come to the forefront on both the national and state level. The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD) was one of the co-sponsors of a conference held last December in Houston that brought together people representing state agencies, consumer groups and other individuals concerned about attendant care. One of the recommendations that came out of this conference was to designate a lead organization to follow up on the conference recommendations. CTD took on this responsibility and has been the convener of the Attendant Care Task Force.

This task force is presently composed of representatives from the CTD Legislative Committee, state agencies, Independent Living centers, consumer organizations, home health agencies and educational institutions.

Over the last 6 months this committee has structured itself into three major areas: Model development, strategies and medical concerns. The goals of the model committee are to develop the components of a state-wide delivery system for attendant care. Major factors that are to be included are: non-medical physical assistance and consumer control. Innovative approaches such as a voucher system where the disabled person would actually receive the funds to pay the attendant and a sliding fee schedule where a person working could access the attendant care program by co-paying depending on income are being investigated as ways to meet diverse attendant needs in the community.

The strategies committee has worked on developing short term and long term objectives to enhance what now exists and to implement the model committee recommendations. Since the beginning of the year, the primary focus has been on the legislative session. The support of the 2.2 million dollar "Shared Attendant Program" line item in the Dept. of Human Resources budget was a major accomplishment for the strategies committee. Now that this money is appropriated, the model committee is in the process of describing what

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Adapt members demonstrate in San Antonio.

"We Will Ride"

By Stephanie Thomas

"ACCESS IS OUR CIVIL RIGHT" was the chant heard over and over by APTA (American Public Transit Association) members in San Antonio for their Southwest regional conference last month. ADAPT (American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit) took to the streets again, this time in Texas, with over 30 disabled civil rights activists from around the country. ADAPT of Texas was there in force also, with members from Dallas, El Paso, and Austin, joining the actions which took place around the Alamo city.

Actions began sedately enough, with protesters circling the glass tower of the Hyatt chanting and carrying signs. APTA conferees looked down on the hotel as the ADAPT protesters called for a meeting with APTA Executive Director Jack Gilstrap. Eventually, after taking over the Hyatt lobby, and with TV crew in tow, ADAPT's demand was met. Gilstrap came down to discuss ADAPT's goal of over two years: that APTA vote on a resolution requiring all members to buy only lift equipped vehicles. But APTA remained firm in refusing to allow either a vote on the resolution or time on their agenda for an ADAPT presentation.

ADAPT's actions the next day were directed at VIA, the San Antonio transit system which has no lift equipment on their main buses. VIA's director, Wayne Cook, is one of the staunchest opponents of mainline accessibility. After taking over the VIA transit building for three and a half hours, ADAPT members met with Cook and Bernie Ford, then President of APTA.

ADAPT demanded a half hour on APTA's agenda, an article in the APTA news magazine, a commitment from VIA for 100% mainline access, and the reinstatement of Rachael Rodriguez, a disabled San Antonian who had been banned from VIA para-transit for misconduct. Ford agreed to the article, but no other concessions were made. Cook, in response to the demands regarding VIA, stated that the disability community in San Antonio supported VIA's position on only para-transit services for disabled persons. However, CTD Board member Willis Williams, who is also Executive Director of SAILS, read a position paper from both the boards of SACCH and SAILS stating the San Antonio disability community's long held support for a multi-modal system, thus contradicting Cook's earlier claim.

Lack of support for ADAPT's tactic's was cited as the reason for poor attendance by local disability activists, despite their widely held support for a multi-modal system. Rachel Rodriguez was in attendance the first two days and Tommy Leifester, SACCH Vice President, attended a meeting between ADAPT and San Antonio Mayor Henry Cisneros on the third day.

Meeting with Mayor Cisneros came in response to the coordinated stopping of buses throughout the downtown area. ADAPT members called for his support to the issue of civil rights. Cisneros agreed to hold a public forum with disabled San Antonians to discuss preferred types of transit. In addition he promised to write letters both to APTA and the

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TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF HONORS CTD AT CENTENNIAL CONVENTION

AT the Centennial Convention of the Texas Association of the Deaf, Jerry Hassell, president, presented a Presidential Citation to the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities. The delegates to this 33rd Biennial convention enjoyed a week-end of informative meetings and workshops in Austin, Texas.

The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities was also honored with the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities is an organization of organizations and brings together statewide and local organizations representing various different disability groups as well as individuals interested in the work of the Coalition; and

WHEREAS, The CTD has been highly successful with its efforts in influencing better and more effective legislation through its tireless efforts in encouraging its affiliated organizations to contact their respective local legislators; and

WHEREAS, The CTD made it possible for the Texas Association of the Deaf to acquire a Vista Volunteer who for the past three years has helped the Association greatly with its correspondence, preparations for the 32nd and 33rd biennial conventions and other regular office activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That we, the members of the Texas Association of the Deaf express our most heartfelt thanks and appreciation of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities for making it possible for the Texas Association of the Deaf to utilize a Vista Volunteer for three years.

**LET YOUR
HANDS DO
THE TALKING**

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY

By Larry Johnson

OUR power as human beings to think about ourselves and our world has led us in this century to overcome gravity, to tread on the moon, to consider the fate of our planet, and to speculate imaginatively about the future. Science has changed our lives, and even the way that we look at the future. Man has transcended the final frontiers of the universe. He can now move almost at will on the floors of the ocean depths, across the frozen expanse of sub-Arctic glaciers, or through the hostile, lifeless vacuum of space. Man can do all of this, and yet, paradoxically, man—society—has been unable or unwilling to build a barrier-free environment here on this earth, with universal accessibility for all persons.

"Universal accessibility." What does it mean? It means to have the opportunity, the reality, to live in a society in which freedom of movement and participation are not governed by one's physical fitness. It means a society in which communication and social interaction are not determined by one's abilities to see or to hear. It means a society in which, at last, science, technology, and human attitude have combined to push aside the barriers of physical inaccessibility and social prejudice to allow for the uninhibited flow of creative talent and abilities from all of its members.

Am I speaking of an impossible, idealistic, utopian world? Am I describing only the naive dream of a wide-eyed optimist? No. That which Man can conceive, he can also achieve. If as a nation we can set a goal to land a man on the moon, to walk in space, to invent a new vaccine, to make computers that talk—if we can do these things, then we can also build a world that is accessible and usable by all persons, including those with disabilities. If this is a dream, then I say: We have the right to dream.

Environmental barriers are really nothing new. As a civilization, we have been building them from prehistoric times, ever since we first learned to place one stone upon another, and we've been piling those stones higher and higher down through the centuries, as our Renaissance cathedrals and modern skyscrapers can readily attest. But ours is a shared environment, and we must learn to construct it in a way in which all of us can share in it equally. Today our society faces a major responsibility and a challenge: to change some of our traditional ways of doing things, of building buildings, transporting people, doing business, rendering service. A new thinking, a new philosophy, must form the foundation for all new enterprise—a philosophy based upon the concept, the goal, of universal accessibility.

"Access" is defined as the right to enter or to use; also as a way or means of approach. Depending upon what it is that you are trying to access, different definitions apply and different solutions and procedures are used to accomplish it. Physical access to a building, for example, may require a ramp or an elevator for a person who is mobility impaired. Communication access at a public forum may require the presence of an interpreter for a person who is hearing impaired, while information access in the case of someone who is visually impaired may necessitate the transferring of materials into braille or on to tape. Access can be accomplished in many different ways.

In a broader sense of the term, access means opportunity—opportunity to represent our concerns, our issues, our demands, to those who possess the power or control necessary to bring about the changes that are needed. And as disabled consumer representatives, this is the first arena which we must do battle and wherein we must achieve our first success at access. Our struggle for access parallels the civil rights movement of the 1960's, when black Americans demanded equal, not separate, rights. We disabled Americans deserve no less today. The 36 million people in our society labeled as disabled, together with several score million other family members and friends, constitute a powerful and significant segment of the consumer population. This sizable economic power has yet to be united. Indeed, we shop at many of the same stores, eat at many of the same restaurants, frequently fly on the same airlines, stay at the same hotels, transact our business at many of the same banks. We do, that is, if they are accessible. Private business is very sensitive to the ebb and

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TELECOMMUNICATION NETWORK INITIATED FOR BLIND PERSONS

A NEW telecommunication information service for individuals who are blind has just been announced. Called "4-Sights Network," the program is being undertaken by the Greater Detroit Society for the Blind and is available for use throughout the United States and Canada.

Vocational, educational, technological, and professional areas of need constitute focal points of the new service. Major informational offering via "4-Sights" will include:

- * Teleconferencing
- * Job Placement Exchange
- * Specialized Training Facilities
- * Multiply Disabled Services
- * Calendar of Events
- * Bulletin Board
- * Software and Hardware Listings, Reviews and Analysis
- * Vocational Rehabilitation Resources

One of the first special features of the Network will be the inclusion of materials from the Occupational Information Library for the Blind. The Occupational Library is one of the major informational sources on jobs available to rehabilitation professionals and blind individuals. 4-Sights will now facilitate quick and easy computerized access to the library and to its large quantities of up-to-date job-related materials.

Computer users equipped with 300-1200 baud modems can readily establish a communication link with the 4-Sights Network, with subscription fees and hourly rates to be readily based on subscribers' needs and type of access systems.

For more information on the 4-Sights projects, contact: Benjamin J. Pumo, Associate Director, Greater Detroit Society for the Blind, 16625 Grand River, Detroit, MI 48227; tel (313) 272-3900.

\$7 million will go for the Cancer Resource Fund for cancer research. The specific breakdowns for TDHR and TDH are as follows:

- \$3 million to serve 70,000 persons under the SB 1 county responsibility bill (TDHR);
- \$15 million to serve 16,000 pregnant women and 25,000 infants under the Medicaid Medically Needy program (TDHR);
- \$6 million to reimburse hospitals that perform a significantly higher level of charity care than other hospitals (TDHR);
- \$1.25 million for coordination of program benefits to prevent duplication of services;
- \$22.22 million to serve 8,500 normal pregnancies and 8,500 high-risk pregnancies under the HB 1023 Perinatal program (TDH);
- \$8 million to serve 80,000 patients per year under the HB 1844 Primary Care program (TDH);
- \$7 million to provide nutritional services for 17,500 women, infants and children under the HB 1001 Omnibus Hunger Act (TDH);
- \$80,000 to implement the HB 1963 Hospital Transfer program, to prevent "patient dumping"; and
- \$450,000 to implement hospital reporting requirements of the indigent health care legislation (TDH).

(Reprinted from *Legislative News*, A report from the United Way of Texas) Editors Note: Through CTD's involvement with The Texas Alliance for Human Needs, support was given to the passage of this Indigent Health Care Bill.

ATTENDANT CARE TASK—IN FULL SWING
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parameters will make up these demonstration projects. The strategies committee is also developing an interim legislative approach to include outreach, education and awareness to the issue of attendant care and what it means for the independence of disabled people. They are contacting consumer groups, home health agencies and have been working closely with the Council on Disabilities. Another major focus will be the state legislators. Educating them during the interim on the issues surrounding attendant care will be helpful when the next session begins.

The medical concerns committee has been looking at the medical requirements presently required by Federal and State regulations that are impeding the provision of attendant care. Meetings with the Dept. of Health, Medicaid personnel and State agency employees have highlighted some of the barriers that now exist. Legal ways to better providing this service without having to utilize expensive medical personnel are being investigated.

CTD has the delivery of attendant care as one of its highest priorities. The time is right and we must ACT!

"WE WILL RIDE"
—continued from page 5

Council of Mayors asking that the issue of mainline accessibility be given serious consideration. He also agreed to investigate the reinstatement of Ms. Rodriguez on the VIA system.

As a new comer to this kind of advocating I was impressed. We were demanding our rights as equal citizens instead of asking for favors. ADAPT's organizers were just plain folk with an exception: all are deeply committed to taking a stand on the civil right to access public transportation.

TERMS DEROGATORY TO THE DISABLED REMOVED FROM STATE LAW

Governor Mark White signed into law May 24 an Act which removes from state statutes terms which are derogatory about persons with disabilities. The bill was co-sponsored by Senator Hugh Parmer and Representative Jack Vowell, both members of the Council on Disabilities. The legislatively created Council on Disabilities had discovered that nearly 200 Texas statutes still contained terms such as idiot, lunatic, feeble-minded, crippled and deformed.

"Our relationship with citizens with disabilities will never be better than our view of the disabled, and that view is prejudiced by such terms" said Reed Martin, chairperson of the Council on Disabilities task force which prepared the legislation. "These discriminatory terms slander persons with disabilities, hiding their unique abilities under a derogatory label."

Martin, an attorney with Advocacy, Incorporated in Austin, added: "The harmful images these old and unfair words create are barriers to citizens with disabilities freely participating in our society. These terms suggest worthlessness, dependency and even dangerousness. No one wants a 'lunatic' to live in their community. We will never have appropriate educational opportunities if we see all mentally disabled persons as 'idiots.' And we will not be sensitive to the need for competitive employment opportunities if we think of a potential worker as 'feeble-minded.'"

"Removing these terms from our statutes knocks down one more barrier to the contribution citizens with disabilities can make in our society. And they are very real barriers" Martin reminds us. "Persons are still being barred from voting because some election official perceives them as an 'idiot' and one Texas town is now in the United States Supreme Court with a case trying to keep the 'feeble-minded' from living in their community."

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY
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flow of consumer demand. Our commercial history is filled with examples of companies that failed to change with the changing world and became tombstones in the corporate graveyard. If we can by our words and actions persuade the private sector that it is in its best economic interest to make its goods and services more readily accessible to persons with disabilities, then we may expect to see private business voluntarily taking steps to put in ramps, braille menus, and install TTY's, in order to attract more consumer dollars from the disabled community, its families and friends.

The state of the art in accessibility design is undergoing constant change. Builders and architects are discovering that it is becoming easier and increasingly more cost effective to erect constructions which are wholly barrier free. Government office buildings, municipal parks, community cultural centers, public transportation are all for the use of the public. And we disabled citizens are part of the public, too. No longer should we be content simply to find our place in the world. Instead, we should strive to change the world to make it our place as well.

Let us throw aside our fears and doubts that the goals we seek are impossible to attain. What we seek through universal accessibility is our freedom: no less than that. Our dream of universal accessibility is our dream of freedom. Let us dare to dream! We have the right to dream and the challenge to succeed.

JOIN CTD

THE Coalition of Texans with Disabilities is a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to cross-disability communication, cooperation and coordination. The Coalition promotes the social, education, physical, and mental well-being of disabled Texans. The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities brings together people and organizations with similar goals in a united effort to represent all disabled Texans to government, the private sector, and general public. Membership in the Coalition enables organizations and individuals to enhance their effectiveness in improving the quality of life for Texans with disabilities.

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