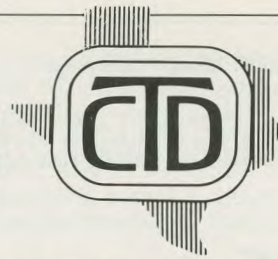


COALITION OF TEXANS WITH DISABILITIES



Fall 1985

NEWSLETTER

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: CTD'S EIGHTH ANNUAL CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER 27-29 are the dates of the Annual Convention, marking CTD's eighth year, to be held in Amarillo. Workshops will be held which cover topics ranging from "Accessing the Media" to "Civil Disobedience, Does It Work?" Speakers will include Dr. Frank Bowe of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, Lex Frieden of the National Council on the Handicapped, Pat Pound former President and Founder of CTD, and Shel Trapp of the National Training and Information Center. The Convention provides our annual opportunity to come together to share our victories and disappointments, meet with old friends and greet new members, elect our leaders and make plans for the next year. CTD's awards presentations, bylaws changes and resolution process formally recognize some of these occurrences.

The CTD resolution process is a means by which member organizations and individuals direct CTD's actions and policy for the coming year. Resolutions address topics such as legislative or policy pursuits, and issues to be addressed by CTD. Resolutions can also cover specifics such as letters of thanks, of concern, etc. By adopting a resolution CTD takes an official stand on the subject of the resolution. A resolution is more effective if an action is included. An action can be as simple as directing that a copy of the resolution be sent to concerned parties, or it can be as complex as designing a program for the upcoming year. This year's Convention promises to have quite a number of interesting resolutions for discussion.

CTD has six award categories. This year the Awards Committee added "Public Servant of the Year" to the original five (VISTA of the Year, Member Organization of the Year, Newsletter of the Year, Grassroots

—continued on page 2



★ ★ ★ FEDERAL ★ ★ ★ LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

AS the Federal Legislature come back into session, quite a few pieces of Federal legislation affecting disabled persons will be under consideration. The Civil Rights Restoration Act is still under consideration. As you know the intent of this bill is to restore the broad coverage of civil rights laws including section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Unfortunately two amendments have been tacked on to the bill which would destroy the bill's neutral stance. One deals with exemptions for institutions affiliated with religious organizations and the other deals with abortions. Contact your representatives and let them know you support the bill without the amendments.

SB 873 and HR 2902, the Community and Family Living Amendments, outlined in the last CTD Monthly News continue to be considered. Although our representatives have returned to Washington, our letters and phone calls supporting the amendments are needed. Briefly, the CFLA would amend Title XIX of the Social Security Act to assist disabled people to attain or maintain their maximal potential for independence and ability to participate in community and family life.

Finally HR 2895 would amend the tax code so that persons with some other disabilities would also be allowed to take the tax exemption now allowed visually impaired persons. Specifically paraplegics, quadriplegics, hemiplegics, amputees and deaf persons would be included. While the bill's definitions are a bit strange and limited in the disabilities added, you may want to contact your federal representatives to voice your support and let them know other disabilities, like cerebral palsy and mental disabilities, should be included.

MOTOR VEHICLE TAX EXEMPTION

YOU can receive a sales tax exemption when you purchase a motor vehicle that has been equipped for the transportation of a handicapped person. The dealer selling an equipped vehicle may write up the transfer paper without sales tax. He should write "handicap exemption" on the sales tax line, and should attach the invoice and/or work order on the sale and installation of the handicap equipment. The invoice and/or work order should identify the particular vehicle on which the equipment is installed.

Person having questions about this sales tax exemption should call their local county tax office or the State Comptroller's Office at 1-800-252-5555.

Organizer of the Year, and Justin W. Dart, Jr. Meritorious Award.) The categories are outlined as follows:

PUBLIC SERVANT OF THE YEAR

PURPOSE: to recognize a public servant who has made a significant contribution to the independent living and disability rights movement.

VISTA OF THE YEAR

PURPOSE: to recognize a VISTA for outstanding work to CTD and/or a CTD member organization.

CTD MEMBER ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

PURPOSE: to recognize a CTD member organization for its outstanding achievements in working towards CTD's goals and objectives.

NEWSLETTER OF THE YEAR

PURPOSE: to recognize a newsletter for achievements in communicating to its readership the goals and objectives of CTD.

"GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATION" AWARD

PURPOSE: to recognize outstanding efforts in the areas of organizing to advance the disability rights and independent living movement.

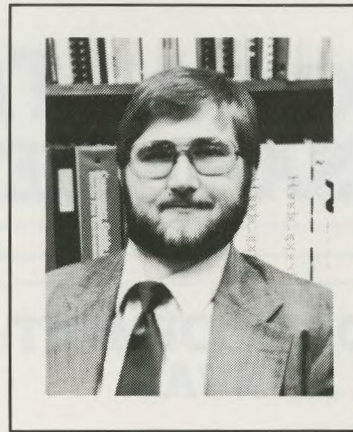
CTD MERITORIOUS AWARD

PURPOSE: to recognize an individual who has made a significant contribution to the independent living and disability rights movement.

Proposed bylaws changes to be considered this year deal with changing the CTD fiscal year to January and changing the membership categories for CTD. Under the proposed changes there would be four categories of membership: Consumer, Affiliate, Associate and Individual. Consumer and Individual would remain basically the same as presently defined. Affiliate would be the same as Consumer, except would not be governed by disabled persons (or their affiliates if they cannot represent themselves.) Associate would cover groups that did not fall under Consumer or Affiliate.

Packets with the proposed resolutions and bylaws changes will be distributed at the Annual Convention. Come to Amarillo and be a part of the decision making on these and other important issues.

LET YOUR HANDS DO THE TALKING



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Marshall Mitchell

THIS year's Annual Convention promises to be a great one. Last minute preparations are being made to insure a beneficial, successful convention for everyone involved. A lot of work has been and is being done to make this the best convention yet. Leadership Development is the theme as the current, longtime leaders pass the torch on to a new "generation" of advocates.

The Eighth Annual Convention will be one of "firsts". This will actually be the first Annual Convention. Previously, it was known as the Delegate Assembly. This will be the first Convention to start on Friday evening. More time was needed to conduct the Coalition's business. It is the first time for it to be held in the Panhandle. It is the first time that we printed registration brochures and it is the first convention for which the site and date were set a year in advance. It is the first CTD convention to be advertised on our stationary for a year. And it is the first one to have exhibits.

For me, it also represents a last. At this convention my tenure as President will end. This is my last President's Report to you. I have thoroughly enjoyed serving CTD and I will continue to do so as a board member when my Presidential term is over. I am very glad to have had the opportunity to lead such a positive, influential organization. It has been hard work, but I have received much more from CTD than I have given.

I have sincerely appreciated the support and hard work which many of you have given. I have been flattered to have been chosen to serve as President of the Coalition. Thank you for that opportunity.

ADVOCACY PAYS! SEE YOU IN AMARILLO!

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:

CTD
P.O. Box 4709
Austin, TX 78765

The Following are publication dates and deadlines for submitting articles:

Winter Newsletter November 25, 1985



CTD VISTA VOLUNTEER PRESENTS TESTIMONY TO U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES' COMMITTEE

by Jean Langendorf

NANCY Crowther, CTD VISTA Volunteer placed with the Austin Resource Center for Independent Living, traveled to Washington, DC to present testimony before the U. S. House of Representatives' Subcommittee on Select Education. A representative of the CTD VISTA program was invited to testify at this oversight hearing. This year is the twentieth anniversary of VISTA and is a particularly appropriate time to look at how the program is functioning to meet changing needs. Nancy, a VISTA for 1½ years, gave her views on how well the VISTA program is working, the effectiveness of the relationship between states and the national office, how well the poverty focus of the program is being maintained, and what is the increasing demand for VISTA volunteers.

Nancy's testimony was well received by members of the subcommittee, which included Representative Steve Bartlett of Texas. The following is a portion of her testimony:

"I am here today to tell you about my experience as a VISTA Volunteer with the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD), the important role the VISTA program has played in CTD's development and the success of the VISTA program in Texas.

My VISTA service began in May, 1984 and has involved working with a variety of individuals with disabilities to assist in developing their independent living skills. Assigned to the Austin Independent Living Center I have worked to improve rehab services develop programs to serve the disabled and provide more independent living opportunities in housing, employment, and social interaction. I have found my VISTA service to be a valuable and rewarding experience.

My VISTA Supervisor, a former VISTA Volunteer herself requested that I tell you the important role the VISTA Program has played in CTD's progress over the past three years. This program has given CTD the arms to reach out across the state to our member organizations. Over the past 3½ years, the VISTA Volunteers placed with member organizations have lent their talent and skills to build membership participation and community services. With their assistance CTD has grown and expanded our membership participation from less than 10 to 70 member organizations.



Over 50 individuals have served in the CTD VISTA Volunteer program. Coming from all walks of life and varied experiences, these volunteers have expressed a desire to take part in helping at a local level, serving in their own communities. The VISTA Volunteers at CTD have been lawyers, social workers, engineers, business people retired teachers, the list goes on and on.....

In keeping with CTD's commitment of promoting the abilities of individuals with disabilities, the CTD VISTA program has recruited and placed in the VISTA program, 35 individuals with disabilities including deafness, blindness, quadraplegia, to name a few. All the CTD VISTA Volunteers have had the ability to work with people and communicate their concern and interest.

By serving as a VISTA Volunteer, these individuals have not only given to their community but have gained an experience that will last a lifetime and many have used these skills to obtain future employment. Most Volunteers are amazed at how much can be accomplished in actual practice. They really expand their self-image and capabilities. They have left behind many on-going services and projects for CTD and the local member organizations.

Over 30 local and state organizations have been served by the CTD VISTA Volunteer programs. Job development programs, training programs, workshops, small business endeavors, fundraising activities and community organizations have all been projects of the Volunteers. It does not take much analysis to see that the VISTA program pays for itself many times over—in terms of human dignity, in terms of benefit to American society and in terms of millions of dollars saved when disabled persons are enabled to live productively.

CTD is currently in the final year of the VISTA Volunteer Program. The remainder of this year we are working to achieve support for local projects throughout the state of Texas. We are proud to have had the VISTA Volunteer program involving such dedicated individuals working to further the CTD message of cross-disability cooperation and communication.

In the state of Texas, there is strong support for the VISTA program since Congress authorized and appropriated funds for the continuation of VISTA last year. The program has grown from near phase out to 30 established VISTA projects across the state of Texas and over 150 Volunteers. Projects with Food Banks, Youth Employment, Literacy Programs-Teach the Children, Parents Anonymous, Halfway House for Ex-Offenders and Big Brothers/Big Sisters are a few of the groups benefiting by the VISTA program.

The investment is not just the year of the VISTA Volunteer service but the real rewards are felt by the community. The work of the VISA Volunteers have produced ongoing projects that benefit the entire population. The VISTA projects are so well received in Texas that all projects have gotten the overwhelming support of the County Judges who are asked to sign off on each project. The majority of the VISTA projects in Texas receive local support for supervision, transportation and on-site project costs.

As you can see those of us in Texas believe the VISTA Program is important to our communities and would

—continued on page 5

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE



ADAPT TRAINING GRANT

THE Texas Chapter of the American Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT) has received a grant from the Live Oak Fund for Change to develop six (6) workshops around the state focusing on the issue of accessible mainline public transit for disabled Texans.

The workshops will bring together disabled persons who are interested in working to make transit systems accessible for all people. The thrust of the workshops will be: community organizing, issue identification, leadership development; and strategies, including civil disobedience.

The first workshop will be held in Dallas, Texas on Saturday, October 26th at the Bachman Recreation Center.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: George Cooper
1518 Meadowbrook Lane
Irving, Texas 75061
(214) 251-1421

Additional workshops will be held in Houston, San Antonio, Amarillo and El Paso. A final workshop will be held in Austin and will bring together leaders from the above mentioned five (5) cities.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Austin Chapter El Paso Chapter
Stephanie/Bob Jim Parker
2810 Pearl 2708 Aurora
Austin, TX 78705 El Paso, TX 79930
(512) 482-8543 (915) 564-0544

CTD VISTA VOLUNTEER—*from page 3*

encourage your continued support. We are proud of CTD's VISTA's program and the other Texas projects, and we invite you to visit us and let us show you how meaningful and cost effective the VISTA program can be. You'll be proud too.

Besides providing a full time service opportunity for individuals with disabilities through the CTD project, VISTA programs have given individuals the opportunity to serve with community programs in Texas over the past 20 years.

The projects have covered a myriad of services and local community support for the low income communities in Texas. Over the years Volunteers have come from all across Texas and other parts of the country to assist with these projects. With VISTA's current emphasis on local recruiting we do receive good assistance but the outside, specialized talents that used to be available through national recruitment are missed. CTD was fortunate to have a very talented VISTA Volunteer serving in another state request placement in Texas. His skills relating to technology brought CTD assistance we could not have received with the limited local recruitment. We would support a move by the VISTA program to include national recruitment in the future to better assist the VISTA projects."

Nancy's trip to Washington included attending the "20th Anniversary Celebration of VISTA" at the home of Eunice and Sargent Shriver. Sponsored by the "Friends of VISTA" the celebration was attended by such noted individuals as Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator Jay Rockefeller, The Honorable Jacob Javits and Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary to name a few. Nancy was also able to spend a day sight seeing in our nations capitol and visiting with Evan Kemp Jr., Executive Director of the Disabilities Rights Center Inc.

TEXAS PLANNING COUNCIL OFFERS BRAILLE AGENDAS AT QUARTERLY MEETINGS

THE Texas Planning Council is pleased to announce that agendas for all quarterly Council meetings will be translated into braille. Braille agendas will be available at each meeting or in advance, upon request.

The Texas Planning Council is a 26-member organization dedicated to improving the lives of nearly 270,000 Texans with developmental disabilities. Occuring early in life, developmental disabilities are likely to continue indefinitely and substantially limit three or more of the following major life activities: self-care, self-direction, learning, language, mobility, capacity for independent living, and/or economic self-sufficiency. Council members include persons with developmental disabilities, their parents and advocates, and representatives from governmental agencies and consumer organizations providing services to people with developmental disabilities.

Council meetings are usually held the first Friday of each quarter—March, June, September, and December—in Austin. For more information on meeting times and locations or to receive a braille agenda contact Roger Webb, Council Specialist, at (512) 445-8004.

RESPITE CARE TEXAS STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

THE Texas Respite Resource Network, funded by the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities, will sponsor a statewide conference on respite care in San Antonio, Texas on February 13 and 14, 1986 at the Gunter Hotel. The conference will feature nationally-known speakers and focus on such topics as training and retention of respite service providers, liability issues relating to respite programs, and model respite programs. This is a great opportunity to learn what works and why in the field of respite care! For further information, please contact Jennifer Cernoch, Ph.D., Respite Coordinator, P. O. Box 7330 Station A, San Antonio, Texas 78285 telephone: (512) 228-2794.

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TRANSITION TRAUMA FROM A PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

By Patricia J. McCallum

TRANSITION...Transition is today's busy buzzword. It is used by educators, rehabilitators and service providers in general. **T**RANSITION! I personally have visions of some fiddler upon a steep rooftop dancing about shouting **T**RANSITION! **T-R-A-N-S-I-T-I-O-N!** However, I do hope we are all more serious about the subject of Transition Trauma.

My dictionary states that transition is a *passage* from one position, stage, state, etc. to another. It is the *process* or an *instance of changing* from one form, activity or place to another.

Passage and process are moving words. They are not static. Hopefully they are a moving forward. Transition should be a movement forward.

Parents of severely and profoundly disabled children, no matter when the on-set of the disability, are *always* in a state of transition. Transition is not news to us, nor a buzzword...it is our way of life. I feel you, as professionals, need to understand that. Oh, sure we all have our usual times of transition—the occasional change in job place; the sometimes change in home place—but, for a parent of a severely disabled child...changes, processes, passages are ongoing.

We first pass through the stages of the grieving process for our lost (quote) normal (unquote) child. Then we must reckon with the trauma that our disabled child is not going to stay home with us until 5-year-old kindergarten. No, for little Johnny, early intervention is a must and we must give him up and trust others to do our mothering a part of each day.

When our baby is only 3 years old, we transition into education and the classroom environment for longer periods daily. We are constantly sharing the babyhood of this child with others. Professionals say, "trust us", and because we want the best for our child...we give up some of our nurturing needs—and learn to trust you.

Parents live from IEP (Individual Education Plan) to ARD (Admission, Review and Dismissal Process) and back again on a yearly basis. With our normal children, we know they will attend the community school progressing from grade level to grade level with the majority of their peers...not so, with our disabled child. We transition into (a) The least restrictive environment; (b) The most appropriate educational planning; (c) The necessary related services; (d) The continuous parent surveys and questionnaires and of course (e) The unabashed eagerness of the Social Worker. And...we continue to learn to trust.

We know, because we have been well taught, that little Johnny deserves all the aforementioned through his 21st birthday!

When our baby is three, our child is seven, our youngster is pre-teen, we parents can not project five years ahead...we certainly do not want to think about adulthood! We are living week by week, month to month and from ARD to ARD. **S**U**D**D**E**N**L**Y,

without much warning, comes the transition into puberty and the **A W E S O M E** teenage years! Now we see *Johnny transitioning* from that sweet little dual sensory deprived child into a wiry young man who uses underarm deodorant daily; who needs a shave once a week; and who displays behavior problems occasionally.

Once again, **T**RANSITION TRAUMA is thrust upon us. Parents do begin to think about the future while still coping with today!

As parents, we have noted that our normal children have grown up and gone out from us on their own—the usual passage—to college; to work; to establish their own identities, families and life-styles. But, what about little Johnny? He only has a few mandated years of education due him and then **WHAT?**

Big Transition Questions: Where will he live? Will he be able to work? Are there continuing education possibilities? Which agency will become his lead provider now? Does such an agency exist? Does he know it exists? Does it know he exists? Will this agency counsel Johnny, his parents and be supportive of their concerns?

—continued on page 7

TECHNOLOGY DATA BASE FORMED FOR RURAL AREAS

WITH an estimated 8.5 million individuals with disabilities living in rural America, a clear need has existed for some time to funnel information on rehabilitation-related technologies into these areas. The rural community often is not privy to the resource linkages and informational access more common in urban areas, and simple access to the knowledge found at a rehabilitation center or a major library may mean a 50-mile trip. Computers have begun to challenge that isolation.

Now, thanks to a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation, an exciting new Rural Rehabilitation Technologies Data Base is being developed at the University of North Dakota for use nationwide. The data base project involves the careful cataloguing of thousands of product descriptions, programs, and innovative rehabilitation approaches for use in the rural environment. When complete, hopefully by 1986, the database will be available for computer access by professionals and interested consumers, and should serve to amplify rural resources while bringing many in rural communities closer together.

Currently, more inputs for the system are being sought. If you possess information on products, devices, or programs relevant to expanding quality of life for people with disabilities in rural areas; or if you have questions regarding access to the new database; please contact: Doris Bornhoeft, Office of Clinical Development, The University of North Dakota, Box 8202, University Station, Grand Forks, ND 58202; tel: (701) 780-2489.

Reprinted from *Computer-Disability News*, Vol. 2 Issue 2

*DISABILITY WORKSHOP—*from page 4

conference will be sponsored by Texas Department of Human Services and Lutheran Social Services. For more information about the conference contact Sharon Pinkston at 512/531-1312 or write her at: 278-1/P.O. Box 37120/San Antonio, TX 78237.

Is there any training or assistance CTD could provide your group? If you think there might be, contact the central office 512/443-8252.

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.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Individual Member

Please make checks payable to: CTD
P.O. Box 4709
Austin, TX 78765

- Yearly \$5.00
- Life Member \$100.00

- Please send me _____ organizational membership forms.
- Please send me the CTD newsletters on cassette tape.

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

TRANSITION TRAUMA—from page 6

No longer can the educational system continue to say "trust me", for we confronted with these parental concerns, most educators face... Transition Trauma! Even though Johnny has matured physically, the system is still reacting cognitively. Teachers have been so busy about the daily chore of it all, they have neglected to invite possible future service providers into their hallowed halls to provide input on preparation programming. The butterfly is about to emerge from the cocoon into the adult world and he isn't ready for it. And, the real world isn't ready for him!

Thus parents make the transition into the adult service arena long before the educators. They seek guardianship when necessary. They form task forces. They author legislation. They work toward a coordination of the service delivery system for their multiply handicapped offspring who has now become an A D U L T. They help write an ITP (Individual Transition Plan), which is a case management instrument to cover persons who are deaf-blind from birth to death. Yes, parents are attempting to work through the transition process...the problem is, we don't know to what? We know from what. We know what we would like to see occurring. We also know that this passage, this process, leads nowhere for our severely and profoundly disabled young adult!

At present, Texas has only two Small Group Homes in existence for deaf-blind adults and neither desire to program for the lower to middle functioning deaf-blind person. They were established to teach independent living skills but if Johnny is not completely independent in toileting; if Johnny has poor communication skills; if Johnny shows some behavior problems...they really don't want to serve Johnny.

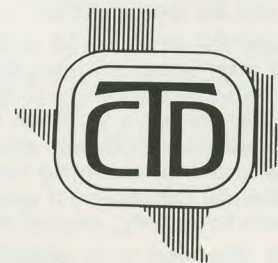
So, what are Johnny's options? We once could include institutionalization as an option, while we parents looked for other alternatives. Today, the institutions are closed to new clients. Nursing homes are still a minor option—if a client needs 24 hour skilled nursing care but, even they are not ready nor geared up for the young adult patient. Home, sweet home, is the most likely future placement for the severely impaired young adult.

Parents have been their child's case managers all along, now that Johnny is 21...they will become his total caregiver, too. It isn't fair. It isn't just. But, it is reality. The passage has gone full circle. Johnny is back in the parental home with nothing to do for most of his waking hours. By now, his parents are middle-aged, tired and looking forward to the empty nest syndrome...instead, they will transition once more into adult service provision

UNLESS SOMEONE ELSE decides there is a unique need, seeks funding and implements programs for the severely and profoundly developmentally disabled young adult!

For years professionals have been asking me to trust them...now, *when I really want and need someone to trust*.....

Editors Note:
Patricia McCallum is the living parent of Jon, a 20 year old young man who happens to be deaf-blind multihandicapped. She was president for 5 years of the statewide parent/professional advocacy organization called The Deaf-Blind Multihandicapped Association of Texas (DBMAT). She is their current volunteer Executive Director. She has been a VISTA with the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities for DBMAT the past 3 years. She is a Governor's appointee to the Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities and is a Co-Chair of the Interagency Task Force for Future Services to Deaf-Blind in Texas.



**WELCOME CTD's
NEW MEMBERS**

National Multiple Sclerosis Society-Central Texas Chapter
1605 W. 35th Street
Austin, Texas 78703

This organization provides service programs and medical equipment to individuals within the central Texas area, also providing public awareness, education and the on-going support of the fight against M.S.

Spina Bifida of El Paso, Inc.
3181 Hero Avenue
El Paso, Texas 79904

This organization encourages interest in research, diagnosis, cause, treatment and rehabilitation of those with Spina Bifida, hydrocephalus and Spinal cord injuries; providing assistance in recruitment and training of personnel and assistance in procurement of adequate facilities and equipment.

Texas Commission for the Blind—El Paso Office
5100 El Paso Drive
El Paso, Texas 79905

This state agency's office main objective is to provide employment placement of persons with vision impairments.

El Paso Legal Assistance Society
1220 N. Stanton
El Paso, Texas 79902
Contact: Kathy M. Barnes

This organization provides legal services to the indigent.

TO THE EDITOR: in response to the article "Universal Accessibility", it must be said that Larry Johnson firmly tapped a nail in place with his 'dream'. No, such a dream is not impossible; fact is that such dreams are all too possible!

What I see the problem as is the majority of the disabled population's willingness to accept the dream, but unwilling to take steps to bring the dream to reality. Idly we have sat back on our respective dreams and allowed an indifferent world, social service agencies and well-meaning disabled people to determine the timeable—if one has ever been set—for our access to society, and all the goods and services.

We have dreamed of an educational system that provides the best educational opportunity to all our disabled brothers and sisters, alive and unborn. But, still we are saddled with separate, unequal opportunities by 'virtue' of separate, unequal school systems for disabled people. Witness special education programs across our State and the State schools for the deaf and blind. It is the responsibility of the State to set guidelines and then to implement them on a local level so disabled students can be educated in the same setting as their peers with whom they will have to work, live and play in the real world. As such institutions persist so do the myths about disabled people. Institutionalized learning is no more palatable than institutionalized living.

Another example is the mass transit systems across our Lone Star State, all of which are functionally inaccessible to the majority of disabled persons. Ironically, disabled organizations and individuals across the State have endorsed a multi-model system

which would provide special, or segregated, transit to those in need and mainline access to the majority of the disabled population. That ideal was no more than a dream as NO transit system in Texas provides full system access, despite reams of written support and verbal testimony.

In effect the dream has become a nightmare which has all too often divided the disabled community; for what reason I have yet to understand. Are not all (well most) disabled people in support of such a multi-model system? Often it seems the dream has become sidetracked as the 'elite' disabled person who works or attends school has access, and as a matter of course quickly forgets the rest of our brothers and sisters who are confined at home or in nursing homes.

The point is that we as disabled people must do more than dream. We need the dreams to spark the inner desire for such systems to change and grow into the 20th century, but also we need people who are willing to put the dreams into action beyond papers and verbal testimony—to take risks. Disabled people must understand that we are the underclass of society and that our actions demonstrate to the community at large our collective dreams. We must be willing to challenge society with our actions; we must believe that it is a moral imperative for all people to have access...young, old, able and disabled. And, historically the only way that lasting change has come about is through collective action such as marches, demonstrations, or civil disobedience. Rights and access, if given, can just as easily be taken away...witness Section 504 guidelines for transit yesterday and today.

A. Parker

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