

The People First Connection



The Voice of Self Advocacy in Oregon
Published by Self Advocates As Leaders
www.asksaal.org

Gaining A Voice

Armesha Houck
Cascade Locks

My dog traveled with me from Arizona to Portland by plane. My Mom picked my puppy and me up from the airport. He was small enough to ride up with me. They put him under the seat; he didn't even bark. He is a Chihuahua/ Dachshund named Estrella.

Why were we in Arizona? Well, my dog was born when I was in Arizona visiting my Mom. Mom lives in Arizona on 10 acres of land. It is fun down there. She takes me swimming, and fishing, and hiking. I love to go every year.

I also like living in Cascade Locks because I like living with my husband and my cat Panda Bear. My sister and my three nephews live around me in town - and one brother-in-law. We get together and play Madness – it's a game of marbles.

I was scared to write this story, but look what I've done! Like me, my dog was so quiet on the plane. Now he barks all of the time!

SEND YOUR STORY TO US! We want you to share your ideas!

THE ADDRESS is:

The People First Connection
C/o Marcie Tafalla
PSU-RR1
PO Box 751
Portland OR 97207

Giving Back

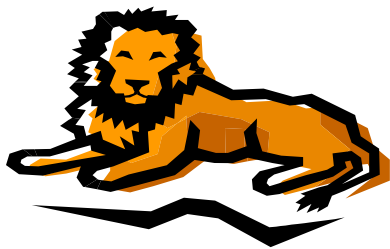
Jim Mathers
Bend

I won the “Lion of the Year” Award from the Bend Lions Club. I do a lot of volunteer work. I’ve been a member since 2005. It was a big surprise to get the award.

I enjoy going to breakfast on Wednesday mornings with the club. We have guest speakers. We are doing a fundraiser now, selling tickets for the annual duck race in Bend. The money will help people get glasses, if they can’t afford them.

We do a lot of work for our communities. Plus, we do the demolition derby and the pancake breakfast at the park each 4th of July. We do a Christmas party for the kids in December.

I love volunteering with the Lions Club.



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Special Olympics Leader

Pat Muller
Seaside

I was a reach-out person for Special Olympics. I tell people how to get involved and what sports are available. Some of the sports are swimming, softball, bowling, volleyball, skiing and track & field.

I do the shot put. I went to Minnesota and took third place. Once I was being filmed for Minnesota TV, running the 400-meter dash, and my shorts fell off!

I met people from Hawaii and Japan at the games in Minnesota.

I go around talking to people about Special Olympics. I've done it for 22 years. I first got involved in Portland. A friend asked me if I wanted to be a coach, organizing the players and showing them how to do the shot put.

My coach's name is Marie Richards. She is like a mother to me and to all the athletes.

She tells us we are wonderful people.

A lot of my friends are in Special Olympics too. I met Brandi when she was a little girl, in the Safeway with her mother. I told her about how she could get involved in Special Olympics. We've been friends for a long time now.

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All articles in
The People First Connection
are written
by self-advocates.

Articles are subject to editing
for grammar, spelling
and content,
with approval by the author.

For our next issue, we are
looking for your stories about
jobs: dream jobs,
successes, frustrations.

We want to hear from you!

The Perfect Coffee Shop

Steve Garner
The Dalles

Some day I'm going to open my own coffee shop. People will come in and sit down with a cup of coffee and a donut. I will be my own boss.

My shop will be called "The Golden Roses." I will hire good waitresses, blondes and redheads. I will also have chocolate cream pie that I hire someone else to make.

I will open "The Golden Roses" so I can try something new in my life.

People will sit inside or outside and lots of people will come. The shop will be in a big building in Rowena and I will live upstairs in it.



Advocate's Corner

It's Election Year Again -- Get Out and VOTE!!!

Judy Cunio

Self-Advocacy Coordinator

Oregon Council on
Developmental Disabilities

On November 7, 2006, Oregon will hold State Elections. We will be electing a new Governor and other state officials. We will also be voting on Ballot Measures. **Everyone needs to get out and vote.** You may wonder why you should vote.

Voting is very important because it is not only our right, but it's our responsibility as citizens of Oregon. We need to let our voices be heard on state issues. Some people might try to tell you that you should not or can't vote because you can't understand all of the issues. But they are wrong!

You don't have to vote on everything on the ballot if you don't know what it is, but you need to **vote on what you can.** You need to be able to vote the way that you want to vote.

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Other people cannot tell you how to vote, even if they try. **It is totally up to you.**

To help you to learn more about voting and your rights and responsibilities, SAAL and SPARC (a self advocacy group from Partnerships in Community Living,) and Oregon Advocacy Center will be putting on **free Voting Seminars** in 4 communities. The times and locations are as follows:

Tuesday, October 10.
2-5pm, In **Monmouth.**

Tuesday, October 10.
6 – 8:30pm, In **Corvallis.**

Wednesday, October 11.
9-noon, In **Salem.**

Wednesday, October 11.
2-5 pm. In **Portland.**

Come and learn about why you should vote. **Find out about the Easy to Read Voter's Guide,** and how Voters can get help.

For more information or to register, call Marcie Tafalla at: 503-725-8129 or toll-free at 1-866-835-0659.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!

Control Over My Vote

Gayle Gardner
Portland

People should be able to vote because if you don't vote, someone can act for you. That's not right. Casting your vote means you are telling your opinion. You have the right to vote your way.

People may influence you and your vote, but they can't vote for you. Your opinion is yours alone. Democracy is about voicing your own opinion.

I do all the decision-making and I have the control over my vote. I may ask for support to help me cast my ballot, but it's my vote.

I worry that a parent or caregiver can take away a person's vote, but that would be sharing their opinion, not yours.

Just because we have a disability and may not understand everything right away, they can't take the right away from us.

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Get a copy of the **Easy-to-Read Voting Guide** in English or Spanish!

Call Oregon Literacy at 503-244-3898 or 1-866-673-8683.

Download copies from the web at: www.oregonliteracy.org, or www.oradvocacy.org

Text and audio versions are on the web at www.lwvor.org

For an audio CD of the Guide call 503-986-2352.

Love Me For Being Me

Denise Welch
The Dalles

Love me for me being me
For I can be no other but me
Love me for who I am
For I can be no other but me.



In every SAAL Newsletter, we ask readers what you think. The next story on page 6 was an answer to silly rules you have to live with.

The Most Ridiculous Rules

Kristi Laney
Baker City



The most ridiculous rules I see in my Adult Foster Home are:

- Having a menu, because that takes away a person's choice to eat what she desires.
- Not being allowed to stay home alone, this keeps the person from learning to be on her own.
- Providers telling us what to do.

All of these rules force people to live by someone else's schedule instead of their own.

We don't have time to listen to our providers breathe down our necks. **We have work and play schedules of our own, and we need to live by our own wishes.**

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New Challenges

Ashley Rose Johnson
The Dalles

I live in The Dalles, Oregon and I went to Mount Hood Kiwanis camp last year.

When I first got to Mount Hood Kiwanis Camp I was very nervous and scared. I did not know anyone on my first day. I had a very nice counselor and his name is Daniel. He lives in Tualatin, Oregon. He is married and his wife is pregnant. He owns his own business.

On the first night at camp, I got very homesick and I wanted to come home because I was not used to being away for a week. The counselors there helped me try to overcome being homesick and to have a good time while I was there.

I had a very nice roommate while I was there. She understood how I was feeling and she told me how she was her first time at camp, and how she overcame being homesick. My roommate lives all the way in Idaho.

I loved being around all the other campers there and I even got to meet new people that I did not know. I enjoyed the food that was there, too.



While I was at camp, I was challenged to climb the rock wall and I was very scared. I got half way and I stopped. I did not want to go any more, but the campers and counselors of my group cheered me on. My other counselor, Luke, had come over to the wall. He saw that I wanted to give up, but I was very encouraged by him. He actually helped me get to the top of the wall!

I was still very scared after I was brought back down. My group was very proud of me and very impressed that it was my first time doing the camp. They said that I was a very hard worker. I will never give up at all.

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An Independent Woman

**Jeanne Petshow
Mount Angel**

Every day, I like to take walks outside of the training center. I like to go to the market. I like to go to the park and smell the flowers. I like to draw pictures. I like to read books and to hang out.

I have a new house. I like to spend time with my roommate. We are funny. We like to play with her cat. We like to go outside and pick weeds.

Sometimes, I go shopping with my roommate's mom.

I like my job. I like working with people. I like to visit with Dad at his home.

I like to be on my own and to be an independent woman.

Learning at PIP

Rita Beckett
Portland

I went down to Salem for the Partners in Policymaking (PIP) class. Some people liked it. It was good to learn about disabilities and meet different kinds of people there.

We went to Salem each month for nine months. We stayed overnight for one night. On Saturdays, we would go home. Some people took the Greyhound or Amtrak train down. PIP paid for everything.

I would like to see more self-advocates in the next PIP class. I met a good friend down in Salem. Her name is Jamie Burch and she lives in Vancouver, Washington. A couple people were nice and friendly to me. Sharon is very nice to me. She is the teacher, and she is also a parent of a child with a disability. Jeni is Sharon's helper; she helps teach the class.

There is a lot of homework, so be prepared for that. Have fun!

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Okay, next self-advocate participants, study hard and don't work too hard. Listen to what they say and take notes.

Again, have fun, but not too much fun, when you get down to Salem. You can meet new people and try to be there for them ... and lots of listening to Sharon.

Things I Like

Izzy Soto
Seaside

I like to watch movies. I like funny movies.

I like Batman on TV, on the Cartoon Network. And I like Scooby-Doo, too.

I went to Las Vegas. I liked the lights.

I liked the sparkly necklaces someone gave me.



My Cat Companion

Butch Houck
Cascade Locks

I have a cat her name is Panda.
She is black and white.

When I feed her she likes me to
hold her bowl of food or water
over the sink. That's how she
eats her food and water, by me
holding it over the sink.

When Panda goes outside, she
sometimes likes to catch garter
snakes by bringing them inside
by her mouth. Then she likes to
play with them.

Panda turns seven in May.
Ever since I was little, I have
always had a cat. They are
good companions.



Self- Advocates As Leaders Needs You!

**Self-Advocates As Leaders
(SAAL) is Oregon's statewide
leadership and advocacy
network for people with
developmental disabilities.**

SAAL is staffed and managed
by people like you, people with
developmental disabilities. We
are here to provide support,
training and skills for everyone.

**We would like to come to
your town and do training or
a Writer's Workshop.
It is easy to set up.**

Please contact MARCIE at:
503-725-8129
1-888-589-1664
or email her at
alvarezm@pdx.edu

VOTE !
 VOTE !

Rodeo

A Poem by Rusty Hubbard The Dalles

I went with a special friend to
the rodeo.
One of the best times I've had.
Nothing about that makes me
feel bad,
A real nice place to go.

We planned to go with a sweet
person
She helped us get tot the event
We dressed up in our Western
wear
And went looking good, nobody
stared.

It was so fun just watching it
unfold
The weather was not too cold.
It was pleasing to see him with
his gift
Gave my spirit a lift.

Remember fondly sitting by my
buddy
And watching the cowboys at
work:
The roping, barrel racing and
how they moved with a jerk.



My favorite part was the bull
riding
How those guys held on with all
the bucking and thrashing
It got kind of frightening
It was very exciting.

I am fond of the memories
made
Earlier there was a parade
Just being able to see the sight
was nice
I could never buy that at any
price.

I gave my friend his outfit
He wore a shirt, boots and hat.
All *that* I gave as a gift to him,
And it was a great compliment
for him to be in them.

Websites to check out:
**Self-Advocates Becoming
Empowered:**
<http://www.sabeusa.org/>

The Empowerment Zone:
www.empowermentzone.com

Self-Advocates As Leaders:
www.asksaal.org
Please check our site for info
about training opportunities, a
calendar of events and other
information. You can find old
issues of *The People First
Connection*, too!

Calendar

Celebrate Wellness VII Conference

Portland **Oct. 14-15**
All day

For more information, contact
Angela Weaver at: 503-494-6868,
1-800-452-3563 ext. 1205, or
email at weaverro@ohsu.edu

Washington County Resource Fair Beaverton Oct. 19

11am – 4pm

For more information, contact
Nancy Milligan-Mock at
503-846-5749.

Staying Safe Workshop

Corvallis **Nov.11**
9-10 am

For more information, contact
Marcie Tafalla at 503-725-8129,
toll free at 1-888-589-1664, or
email: alvarezm@pdx.edu

Youth as Advocates!

Eugene **Nov.17**
6:30-8:30 pm

Hosted by the City of Eugene
Parks and Recreation and SAAL.
For more information, contact Joe
Basey at 541-682-5311, or email:
Joseph.T.Basey@ci.eugene.or.us

Writers' Workshops

**Join a community of people
who want to share
their stories.
Beginning Writers are
Welcome!**

Medford

Tuesday, November 14th

Grants Pass

Wednesday, November 15th

Newport

Saturday, November 18th

For more information on these
workshops, or to register, contact
Marcie Tafalla at 503-725-8129,
toll free at 1-888-589-1664, or
email: alvarezm@pdx.edu

The People First Connection
publishes poems, stories and
your thoughts on issues you
face. YOU can write to us!

**NEXT ISSUE: Our theme
is Jobs & Employment.**