

The People First Connection

The Voice of Self-Advocacy in Oregon
Published by Self Advocates As Leaders



Anything Goes, A Mixed-Bag Issue

The thing that our readers enjoy most is reading about other people's lives. These stories can range from jobs, hobbies, dreams, summer vacation, and more. As Cole Porter wrote in a song, "Anything goes." We trust that you will enjoy reading this issue, with a variety of stories about what some self-advocates are doing.

**Have YOU ever
sent us a
story?**

We would love to
hear from you!

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People First Connection
c/o SAAL

PSU-RRI

PO Box 751

Portland OR 97207

www.asksaal.org



My Job Is Important

By Anthony Moody, Central Point, Oregon

My name is Anthony Moody.

I would like to talk to you about my job. I work for Rogue Valley Transit District cleaning the community busses. I have had my job for over a year. It makes me feel good that when people get on a bus, I have made each bus

clean. I clean five busses every day. Also, it makes me feel good to work hard.

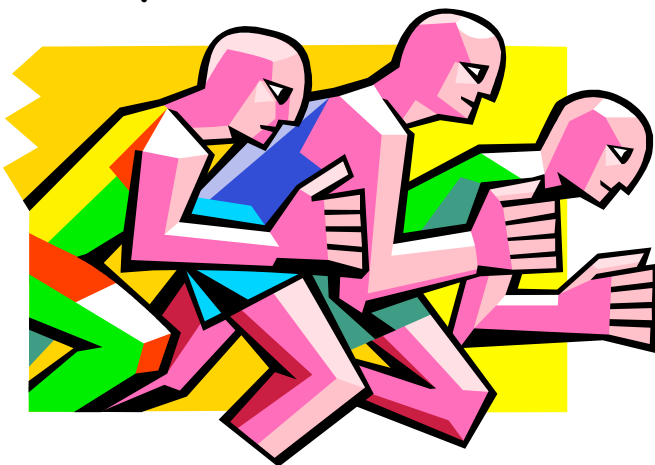
I make my own money and I'm able to purchase my own personal items. The next thing I like about working, is working with my best friend, Tim.

Tim is cool and will work with me when I need help. I work Monday through Friday and I get the weekends off. When I get my check from work, I take it to the bank with my House Manager, Laynie. I save some money, but I also like to spend money.

This weekend, I'm going to buy a new shirt and a baseball cap to add to my baseball cap collection. I have a wall full of them in my room at home.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story.

A Talk I Gave to My Cross-Country Team



By Jordan Ackerson, Lake Oswego

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I really like being on the cross-country team because it's very cool to run and to hang out with other members of the team. There are really a lot of friendly and caring people that I've met and hope to continue to get to know better after Cross Country season is over.

I'm talking to you today because I'd like to be more included in fun social get-togethers when I'm not in school.

When I'm hanging out at home I like to check the weather in the newspaper, the computer, or on TV. I also listen to my radio, fix my hair or read, if I feel in the mood. A lot of times on the weekends, I don't really have activities that are scheduled. I would really love it if some of you would either call me up to plan something we could do together or I could call you.

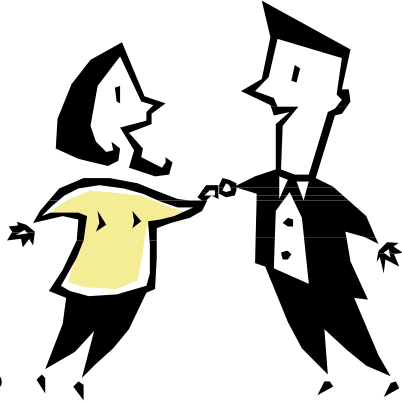
Here are some things I really would enjoy doing with other kids:

- Bowling
- Roller skating at Oaks Park
- Oaks Park rides
- Going for a run, a hike or a bike ride
- Doing a group service project
- Going out to eat
- Hanging out at someone's house
- Going to a dance
- Going to a game
- Going to a movie or a play
- Singing together/karaoke
- Coming over and using our hot tub
- Making up funny videos
- Instant messaging
- Going to an art gallery
- Going to Borders when they have live music.

Next Topic

Friendships & Relationships

WHO DO YOU CARE ABOUT? FUNNY DATING STORIES? WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF FINDING SOMEONE?



Together

By Mary Jo Dallaire, Medford

A year ago, I was in a foster home with Kathy. I enjoyed all of Kathy's animals. It was a nice place for me to stay. I enjoyed Tanya and Josh. I got to read lots of books and color in coloring books while there. The hard part was that I missed my husband, Victor.

Victor loves to fly kites. When he goes to fly, I go with him. Victor also likes to go fishing. He likes to catch salmon when he goes fishing. Victor's new thing is to go swim at the YMCA. Today, Victor got home late. He got on the White City bus, way out of the way. I was worried about him.

Today, Victor and I are back together in our house. Victor is happy with me and I'm happy with him. On June 30th, he turned 72. We have been married for 26 years. We hope to be married for a long time.

VOTE!

It's your right! Send ballots in
before November 4, 2008



Plenty to Do

By Carol Loe, Portland

When I go out, I ride the Tri-Met Lift bus and see different places. I am glad that I can ride it. I go on weekly visits to the Starbucks coffee store and American Dream Pizza Parlor. I went on outings with the group from home to the Value Village Store, Gresham History Museum, and the Alpaca Farm.

I went to Canby, Oregon to put flowers on my parents' graves on Memorial Day weekend. I went to a dinner party at the Melody Ballroom to honor Father John as he retired. I also went on a picnic to Laurelhurst Park with others from my church. I went on the "Cruise-In" at Eastport Plaza to see all the old cars on display.

In October, I moved to a new foster home. Again this year, I sold a lot of my handcrafts at the All Saints Bazaar which was held the first weekend in November. I went to the Providence Festival of the Trees at the Convention Center with a group from Elder Place.

Recreation Story

By Gregory Bonacich, Corvallis

I joined Special Olympics in 2004 because I decided that it was a way for me to meet other people that also participate. During the time competing against other individuals and making new friends, it showed that I still could have fun in recreation.

I participated in volleyball, softball and basketball. When I began, I spent my first year competing, getting acquainted with my teammates and coaches. I got used to practice schedules and played tournaments. It's so wonderful meeting people with and without disabilities. I like being around some people with good communication skills as well as other individuals I compete against in Special Olympics. I also enjoy chatting with my teammates and coaches.

I also had a chance to be an assistant coach, which gave me the opportunity to teach people who were on my team. I made sure they were taught the true meaning of good sportsmanship, how to win gracefully and lose with dignity. I taught them during our practices: trying not to lose your concentration then listening to what your coach is trying to tell you. Another thing we did with our teammates was trying to establish good communication skills, which helped them improve self-esteem.

Having the opportunity to participate in Special Olympics and being a

part of having a story to submit makes me feel wonderful. There wasn't any discrimination or judging anyone with developmental disabilities.



Enjoying Special Olympics

By Gary Hilgendorf, Cottage Grove

I have been involved in Special Olympics for 30 years. It has been wonderful. I get to see all my friends from around the state at state games. My favorite sports are: first basketball, then bowling, and track. Last spring, I did a new sport for me – Bocce.

We had a great basketball season. We lost two games on Saturday, then won one game by one point on Sunday, giving us a second place finish, the silver medal.

If I weren't doing Special Olympics, I don't know what I would be doing. It is my main activity. I love Special Olympics and how it's helped me make friends, learn new sports, and have the opportunity to stay in a hotel overnight away from family. I can also enjoy dancing and good food.

Advocate for Independence

By Kristi Laney, Baker City

I have just been called by the Governor to serve on the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities. Over a period of time, I have had a substantial amount of advocacy and disability movement exposure. I have the most input on the Independent Living Philosophy.

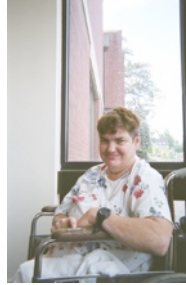
The Independent Living Philosophy is the history of how independent living was started. The ADA states in Section 701, "it is to promote a philosophy of independent living, customer control, peer support, self-help and self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy, in order to maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society."

I am looking forward to working with the Council here in Oregon, and getting some information about how to fight to get subsidized costs for lunch at the Community Center. I am now calling Bingo numbers each week after lunch.

Check Out SABE Nation!

What's happening around the country in Self-Advocacy?

<http://www.sabeusa.org/SabeNationSept2008.pdf>



ADVOCATE'S CORNER

By Judy Cunio, Self-Advocacy Coordinator for the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities

DD Council and SAAL, More Than a Partnership!

As some of you know, one of SAAL's main funders is the DD Council. But our relationship goes beyond that. Several members of SAAL have been or are still on the DD Council, including the Executive Director, Cindy Helvington. Cindy was on the DD Council from 1999 to 2003, where she was the Chair of the Self-Advocacy Committee for 2 years. She is a Partners In Policymaking graduate.

Rosella Samuelson served on the Council for 8 years and was also the Chair of the Self-Advocacy Committee. She now serves on the SAAL Public Policy Committee.

Charlie Hammett served on the Council from 2000 to 2008 (8 years). He also served as the Chair of the SAAL Public Policy Committee.

Gayle Berniece Gardner has been on the Council since 2003 and is now serving her second term. Gayle is

SAAL's regional representative for the national organization, Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered. She also was Chair of the SAAL Outreach and Training Committee.

Ruth Morris has been on the Council since 2001 and has about another year to go. Ruth also has served as Chair of the Self-Advocacy Committee for the Council and is currently the Vice-Chair of the full Council. She also served as Chair of SAAL's People First Connection (PFC) Editorial Board.

Margaret Whipple was on the Council for 8 years. She is now on SAAL's Public Policy Committee.

Becky Shepardson joined the Council in 2006. She has served as the Chair of the SAAL Outreach and Training Committee. Becky was also the lead trainer for the Violence Awareness Training.

Rena Kriegh has been on the Council since 2006. She is the Vice-Chair of SAAL's Operations Committee.

Dean Howard has served on the Council since 2001 and was one of the founding members of SAAL.

Kristi Laney is the newest member of our Council and we look forward to working with her. Kristi is on two of SAAL's committees: the Editorial Board of the People First Connection and the Outreach and Training Committee.

Last, but certainly not least, is Dayna Davis! She recently left the Council in August when her term ended. We want to thank her for all her work and leadership over the past 8 years. She was the Vice-Chair of the Council for a number of years. Dayna has had several positions with SAAL. She was the Chair of SAAL, and is currently the Chair of the PFC Editorial Board. Dayna was also an Ameri-Corps*VISTA Volunteer for SAAL. Dayna is currently working on becoming a certified trainer for People Planning Together through the Oregon Technical Assistance Corporation (OTAC).

I like what Dayna said about how she feels about her life. She says "I wake up happy every day and my struggles over the years seem to be worth it."

On behalf of the Council, I would like to thank Dayna and everyone else on SAAL and the Council for all of their hard work and dedication. They all have laid the groundwork for others as we look forward into future of self-advocacy in Oregon. It is our hope that some of you who are reading this will pick up where we leave off and even go beyond what everyone has done.

**We are a real TEAM!
TOGETHER EVERYONE
ACHIEVES MORE!**

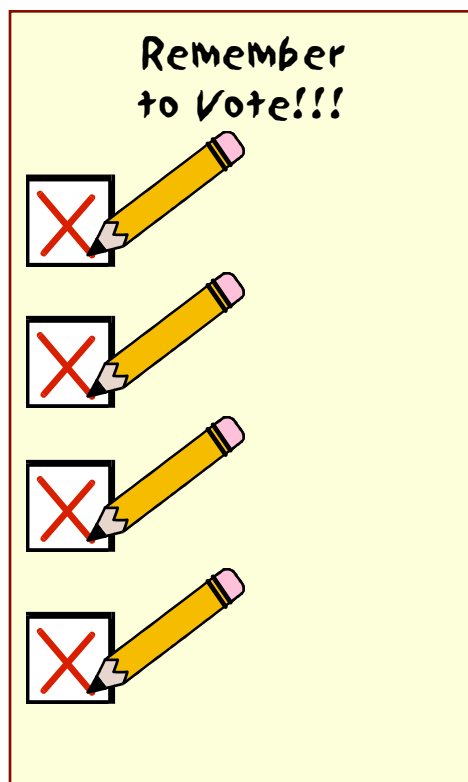
Remembering JFK

By Lady Goodman, The Dalles

I am remembering the day when JFK (John Fitzgerald Kennedy) had a debate with Richard Nixon. I saw them on a large black and white TV. I was with my parents in Fairbanks, Alaska at home on an army base. It was snowing outside.

I remember telling my parents some day that man will be President of the United States. I was talking about Nixon being trouble for our nation.

And the saddest time in history and for the nation was November 22, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, when President Kennedy was killed. As a child, I saw the President killed and it haunts me even now as an adult, after 45 years.



My Hopes and Dreams

By Mary Stirling, Portland

My three goals are:

1. I want to live in a supported apartment living facility out in the community.
2. I want to go to college to get my Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts. I also want to get my Bachelor's Degree in Journalism.
3. I want to get married some day.

I am currently living in an assisted living facility with other residents with disabilities. Some have neurological disabilities. It gets very depressing especially when I eat in the dining room with the other residents every day.



I have taken a lot of art classes in the past to improve my art skills that I still work on here at my home. I like to write poetry, haiku poetry. Also, I write essays, stories about my life in my journal book. My hobbies are crocheting hats, scarves and coin purses, as well as gardening and flower arrangements. I like putting a lot of pretty flowers in a vase.

I have one sister, Barbara, who lives in Tigard, Oregon. My brother Michael lives in Portland, Oregon.



Flying to Disneyland

By Kathy Armstrong, Springfield

I am 49 years old and have lived in an Albertina Kerr Centers group home for the past 20 years. One of my favorite things to do is watch Disney movies. I have a complete video collection and CDs of Disney music. After work, I enjoy spending time watching the movies and listening to music. I often hum along with the songs.

Last March, staff helped me plan a vacation to Disneyland. I had never been there before and had never even been on a plane before. I was excited when we arrived at the airport. When it came time to get on the plane, I looked at the plane, then looked under

the plane and started backing away. Flight attendants were helpful encouraging me to get on the plane and I slowly went up the gangway. When I made it onto the plane, many passengers clapped and told me what a great job I was doing.

When we got to California, we checked into our hotel across the street from Disneyland and relaxed in the hot tub. I love to relax in the hot tub. We spent the next two days at Disneyland. I got to see the parade with all of the characters from my favorite movies, life sized and right in front of me. I hummed to myself.

On the return flight, I was tired but got right on the plane and had a great flight home. I enjoyed it so much I am already planning another trip for me to return.



My Life

By Jim Mathers, Medford

I really like where I'm living in Medford. I moved from Bend about two months ago. I live in an apartment, a really nice place. I live by myself and I have people who help me. I really like the people who help me. We do group activities and birthday parties. Tomorrow, a little group goes out to lunch at Round Table Pizza. They let me go for walks and do things by myself, like go golfing.

I live over by the Living Opportunities office. They are trying to find me a job and I walk to the Drop-In center where I meet friends. One of my best friends is my neighbor, Artie. They let me take the bus today to get my own bus pass and they are going to let me go to a concert soon to see LeAnn Rimes, she's country. She is coming to the Britt Festival in Jacksonville.

The group had a birthday party today. It was Dorothy C.'s birthday. I will see Kevin tomorrow at our luncheon. My sister lives in Medford in a group home. I get to see her every once in a while. It is good to live in the same town now. I live with my bird, a parakeet. I got to golf in the tournament last week. I did excellent, I golfed 18 holes. I was tired when got home.



A Road Trip By Jon Trip, Corvallis

My stepmother, Clean, and I went on a road trip. I took a Greyhound bus to Portland, and my step mom picked me up. Her grandson, Noah, was with her. We bought motor oil for her car. Noah liked looking at the fishing rods. My step

mom drove us back to her house. Shannon was there. That's Clean's daughter. Shannon had her kids with her. I got to see my dad's two dogs.

We switched cars, and it was packed with everything we needed. We stopped on the way to get a drink at Dutch Bros. We were on our way to Seattle! We drove and it took us close to three hours to get there from Portland. We dropped off our stuff in our hotel rooms. We called my sister and got her address and directions. We got there and I gave her a hug. She had new bark dust near her patio. Katie and Julie, my nieces, had a miniature playhouse with spiders in it. Julie used to make Katie clean out the spiders when they were little. Debbie showed me the house and it's small and nice. A guy helps with yard work. We went to the Old Spaghetti Factory for dinner. Katie came, but Julie was moving and couldn't come.

Clean, Debbie and I went back to the house

and talked. We dropped off a desk for Debbie. An old milk carton contained pictures of my dad. I like the one of him on his sailboat. Pictures get old and fade in color. Debbie and I both liked the sailboat picture of dad. One picture with my older sister and two younger sisters was nice to see. One went to Ann and Sarah. My mom also got some pictures we sent her.

The next day, we went to the frame shop and got some things sorted out. Later, I got my photos framed on my own. Debbie showed us around Seattle. We saw the King Dome and the Space Needle. We took pictures by a water fountain and went to Subway near a food court. Clean went to the top of the Space Needle even though she's afraid of heights. They took pictures of the three of us. It's pretty amazing at the Space Needle. Debbie pointed out boats off Puget Sound. I like the picture!

We shopped around and went to a candy

store. We bought large bags of taffy and I just finished it this week. We had something to drink and then went to a Farmers Market. They throw the fish back and forth. I saw a lot of arts, crafts and T-shirts. My step mom bought me a T-shirt. Later, we visited University of Pacific. We ate at an outdoor restaurant that was very nice. Katie and I caught up a little. Dinner was good. After dinner, Katie showed us around. Clean found her purse and camera, which was in the camera case. Katie gave the waiter her phone number! Debbie was taking a dance class, so we visited later. Katie wanted to set Debbie up on a date with a man in the class. It's Debbie's dance partner.

We had continental breakfast at the hotel the next day. It was a good breakfast. We watched TV and rested. Thursday the 14th, we drove to IHOP. It was the first time I've ever been to an IHOP. It was delicious. Debbie went her way,

Clean and I went our way. You have to pump your own gas in Washington, which was different for us. I treated myself to ice cream. Clean bought me a hamburger and a drink for herself. We got back to Portland around 2 p.m.

I got to see my mom for about an hour. I dressed nice and she was impressed. Clean picked me up and took me to the bus stop. I had a difficult time at the bus station. She drove me to the Salem bus stop since I missed Portland's. The bus got me home at 6:15 p.m.. I treated myself to dinner. It was hot in Corvallis when I got back.

Quote of the Day

“Education remains the key to both economic and political empowerment.”

- Barbara Jordan

Calendar

Building Futures, Transition to College & Employment Conference

Oct. 27-29, 2008
Embassy Suites Hotel, Tigard

For more information, contact www.orpti.org or 1-888-505-2673.

Life Stories Workshops

Coming in November to Willamette Valley (maybe Corvallis?)

For more information, contact Marcie Alvarez, 1-866-8350659 alvarezm@pdx.edu

Notice

SAAL's office will be closed for 2 weeks at the end of December.

Website

www.sabeusa.org

SELF-ADVOCATES
BECOMING EMPOWERED

**Live in Portland
Metro Area?
Be a Self-Advocate!**

People First of
Multnomah County
wants to start up again.

We are looking for
people who want to
learn to have a voice in
local decisions.

We invite people in
Multnomah, Clackamas
or close-in Washington
county to come.

Our first meeting was in
August, at the United
Way Building, in down-
town Portland.

We need more people
to come to the next one
to make it work.

For more information or
to find out about future
meetings, contact
Steve Kramer at:

sandskramer@comcast.net
or call 503-231-1054.

**Witness to Believe
By Daniel McKinney,
Toledo**

I was raised in a positive culture that has given me hopes and mercy. It helps that someone, like a guardian angel, helps me to make confidential choices. This happened to me, when I was growing up. This has become a glorious time. It takes a lot of faith to believe. But many people in this world are having troubles with their religion, being created falsely by unknown believers, not everyone in this world is perfect.

Everyone can get acquainted in the community from the church culture and state they want to believe. In my religion, we don't spread out the word to the people. It doesn't matter who is wrong or right, if everyone has a conscience. But it takes a lot of time to think about right and wrong.

Many people in this world don't understand the dignity of life, which supports the foundation of our government here in

the United States. Everyone has boundaries in their world, and things they want to change. Our main responsibility is to have integrity.

I listen to music that has a positive effect: to Michael W. Smith, Steven Curtis Chapman, Newsboys, Delirious, DC Talk, Casting Crowns, Mark Schultz and Chris Rice. I went to see the Newsboys for the first time in Montgomery, Alabama around January 2003. I went twice to see them again in February 2004 with my Dad in Salem, Oregon. Going to these concerts has touched my life.

**Life Stories
Workshops**

**Want to schedule one
near you?**

**LEARN THE POWER OF
YOUR STORY**

**CONTACT
MARCIE ALVAREZ
503-725-8129**