

A Life of Promise: From Desperation to Getting Things Done

By Will Morales, Project Director, Access AmeriCorps/United Cerebral Palsy Associations (UCPA)

I remember thinking at age 25, that there had to be something more to my life than sucking down a six-pack of beer and smoking almost two packs of cigarettes a day. I slept all day and spent many sleepless nights pondering my future and wondering what miracle I could make happen in my life. I lived in a small “gimp ghetto,” where the most common form of entertainment was drugs and alcohol. Out of 24 people with disabilities, only five either worked or went to school, and 12 were active or recovering substance abusers. Without having a focus to guide my path, it was easy to fall into the practices of the majority.

During this time, I attempted school and employment, with unsatisfactory results. My mind was not in the right place during the semester, so I would start strong and finish academically poor. Ultimately, I wasted my maximum financial aid with nothing to show for it. The jobs I managed to get left me unfulfilled and even more frustrated.

Years passed, and at age 29 I separated from my wife and initiated a divorce. I had a part-time job that left me with too much time on my hands—time to feel sorry for myself and think about the disaster I had made of my life.

If only we could turn back time—but we cannot—so all that is left to ask is, “Where do I go from here to make it better?” I remembered a small not-for-profit organization that worked with people with disabilities and had given me a helping hand during the first stages of my separation. I stopped by their office to talk to the executive director. We talked about the mission that this small, four-staff Independent Living Center (ILC) had. One of their main goals was the empowerment of people with disabilities. Wow, what a concept. For the first time in my life I was hearing that I actually had choices—that I did not have to graciously smile in appreciation in receiving whatever was given to me. I learned that I had the choice of living

See Will Morales, page 12

Theme: Recruiting and Retaining Members with Disabilities—Editor’s Box

The period is fast approaching when many national service programs will be gearing up to recruit new members to fill service slots. In order for us to live up to our goal to create truly diverse national service teams, there is a certain level of awareness and knowledge that is necessary.

This issue of *The Resource Connection* is devoted to a discussion of ideas on how to recruit and integrate persons with disabilities into national service programs. Your peers from different service streams share experiences and concrete ideas related to the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities. The task is not completed merely by adding numbers to the ranks, although this can be challenging. Rather, the development of meaningful service opportunities that allow individuals to serve to

their fullest capacity, and your commitment to coherent integration of persons with disabilities are what denote successfully diverse programs.

Will Morales, Director of Access AmeriCorps, a national training and technical assistance provider, provides a thoughtful view from the perspective of a person with a disability. We see how important it is to afford everyone the opportunity to serve. You are also treated to a look inside various programs that are successfully integrating diverse members. As always, please contact or otherwise use the resources presented here and those that are available through the National Service Resource Center for more information and ideas. Good luck as you recruit and fully integrate persons with disabilities into your programs—you will all be richer for it. ■

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Creating a Diverse Team: Recruiting Persons with Disabilities

By Kevin Elliott, Project Director Austin Resource Center for Independent Living (ARCIL) AmeriCorps Project, and Jennifer Geagan, Project Manager, AmeriCorps Disability Demonstration Project at the World Institute on Disability (WID)

What is the Americans with Disabilities Act?

- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination law that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities.
- The ADA is the most recent and the broadest federal disability rights law.
- The ADA protects people with disabilities from discrimination by employers, state and local governments, and places of public accommodation.
- The ADA applies to all Corporation for National Service-funded programs.

For more comprehensive information on the Americans with Disabilities Act, visit the following Web site: <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm>

Mark Lang, who is paraplegic, spent two years building ramps for people who use wheelchairs. Willie Duestra, who has cerebral palsy, worked with seniors and shut-ins to involve them in their communities. Colin Pitroski, who is deaf, spent time restoring dilapidated homes for low-income families. These are examples of persons with disabilities who have served their communities through AmeriCorps. They worked to make significant changes, demonstrating to their peers and communities that people with disabilities are also leaders, role models, and service providers.

National service strives to reflect the diversity of the population it serves. When you consider that 17.2% of Americans have a disability of

some type, it becomes vital to have the national service community committed to increasing the number of persons with disabilities engaged in national service.

The Corporation for National Service currently funds five Disability Demonstration Projects (DDP) that provide training and technical assistance to AmeriCorps programs regarding outreach, recruitment, and retention of persons with disabilities. Two such projects are the World Institute on Disability (WID) in

AmeriCorps and other national service programs provide an ideal opportunity for Americans with disabilities to serve their communities while gaining valuable experience and skills.

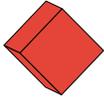
California and the Austin Resource Center for Independent Living (ARCIL) in Texas. The following page lists recommendations from WID and ARCIL on what AmeriCorps and other national service programs can do to demonstrate their commitment to actively recruiting and including persons with disabilities in their programs.



Sarah Wells, AmeriCorps member with Youth Options AmeriCorps Austin, at a recent Make a Difference Day. The project included building a playscape.

Successful Recruitment

Consider these strategies for successful recruitment of persons with disabilities:



- **Provide awareness training and ADA compliance information to staff—**

- ✓ Promote equal opportunity for persons with disabilities by providing project staff with a quality disability inclusion education program. Such an education program should:

- Include information about legal obligations;

- Dispel myths and misconceptions people have about individuals with disabilities, help them become culturally sensitive, and include the use of appropriate language;

- Address ADA compliance and accommodations issues.



- **Insure inclusive promotional materials—**

- ✓ Strive to create a “disability-friendly” environment; include persons with disabilities in integrated settings in any photographic outreach materials along with such statements as, “Persons with disabilities encouraged to apply,” and “Reasonable accommodations provided upon request.”

- ✓ Place posters at chest level so persons using wheelchairs can easily read them.

- ✓ Provide information and materials in alternative formats; people with hearing impairments may not read a poster or pamphlet unless they see a TTY or TDD (Telecommunication Device for the Deaf) number in larger letters assuring accessible program communications. Materials in braille, large print, computer disk, or audio tape should be available for persons who are blind or visually impaired.

- ✓ Be prepared to provide reasonable accommodations during the application and interview process if requested.



- **Target recruitment locations—**

- ✓ Hold recruitment presentations in accessible locations.

- ✓ Develop partnerships and cultivate personal contacts with community organizations that provide employment and career support services for persons with disabilities, such as local independent living centers, rehabilitation and disability-service organizations, support groups, state disability agencies, university offices for students with disabilities, and vocational adjustment counselors in high schools.

- ✓ Post national service program information on disability-related internet listservs.

Mark Your Calendar:

The first annual “Inclusion in Action” conference sponsored by Access AmeriCorps will be held July 26-30 in Washington, D.C. at the Capitol Hilton Hotel.

This conference will focus on the inclusion of people with disabilities in national service programs.

- Discover low to no cost options to providing reasonable accommodations;
- Identify and explore the definition of modification of policy and procedures;
- Participate in disability awareness and expand your understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- Expand your understanding of the effects of the living allowance on SSI and other benefits;
- Identify where and how to recruit individuals with disabilities

For more information, contact Will Morales, Project Director for Access AmeriCorps at: 800-872-5827, ext. 7143, TTD: 202-973-7197; fax: 202-776-0414; email: wmorales@ucpa.org

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Basic Rules of Etiquette When You Meet a Person with a Disability

Guidelines from a Handout by United Cerebral Palsy (UCPA)/Access AmeriCorps

1

Any and all assistive devices (canes, wheelchairs, crutches, communication boards, etc.) should always be respected as personal property. Unless given specific and explicit permission, do not move, play with, or use them.

2

Always direct your communication to the individual with a disability. If the person is accompanied, do not direct your comments to the companion.

Diverse Team

(continued from page 3)

- ✓ Use call-in lines that some newspapers have which provide recordings of articles for people who are blind, visually impaired, or dyslexic to market a program and/or recruit members.
- ✓ Present information at job fairs, especially job fairs targeting persons with disabilities. Coordinate outreach efforts with other national service programs in the area by giving joint presentations to disability organizations, at job fairs, or conducting workshops for persons with disabilities who may be interested in service.

Resources for Accommodations

Access AmeriCorps is administered by United Cerebral Palsy Associations under agreement to the Corporation for National Service. State Commissions are granted funds to assist AmeriCorps*state competitive and national direct programs in paying for accommodations. If a program itself pays for the accommodations, this can be counted towards matching requirements. For local resources, contact local independent living centers or state vocational rehabilitation offices.

Opportunity in Diversity

Disability is part of the diversity that makes up American communities. AmeriCorps and

other national service programs provide an ideal opportunity for Americans with disabilities to serve their communities while gaining valuable experience, skills, and enhanced self-esteem. Membership in national service programs likewise allows those communities served to benefit from the skills and experience of people with disabilities.

For more information on the issues regarding recruitment of persons with disabilities, accommodation provisions, and trainings for staff, contact Access AmeriCorps, the national disability inclusion training and technical assistance provider, at 202-776-0406. ■

Disability Demonstration Projects

The following are Corporation for National Service Disability Demonstration Projects. Contact these projects for more information, or call Access AmeriCorps and ask for Will Morales at 202-776-0406 for referrals.

ARCIL Inc.

555 North Lamar
Austin, TX 78751
512-467-0749
Kevin Elliott

Drake University

2507 University Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50311-4505
800-443-7253
Amy Desenberg
or Doug Keast

North Carolina Dept. of Human Services

616 Oberlin Rd.
Raleigh NC 27605
919-733-5199
Dr. James Rose

Project Inclusion

1660 L St. NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
202-973-7144
Muffi Lavigne

World Institute on Disability

510 16th Street
Oakland, CA 94612
510-763-4100
Mark Behrendt ■

VISTA: People Helping People

By Cheryl Vines, Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission Director and VISTA Project Director

When the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission (ASCC) applied for a VISTA project in 1993, the primary purpose of the project was to develop a peer support program for newly injured individuals. The ASCC, a small state agency serving over 2,000 people of all ages with spinal cord disabilities, applied for the project to stretch available resources. Since the project was to recruit and train peers, it was important that a person with a spinal cord disability be involved in the project, and the VISTA position description was written accordingly.

Accepting this challenge, ASCC recruited within their client population, sending out job announcements to case managers, rehabilitation counselors, and advertising in the agency newsletter. In addition, job announcements were sent to independent living centers, career counseling offices, and disabled student services throughout colleges in the region. Finally, an informal call went out by phone to coordinators of disabled sports and recreation programs, peer counselors at national rehabilitation centers, and also through the state Office of Volunteerism, all with the support of VISTA staff. The efforts were fruitful, and several people applied for the position.

While this project was unique and required specific recruiting of a person with a disability, similar methods can be used to recruit within the disability community. Americans with disabilities are frequently unemployed or underemployed. There is often the fear of losing disability income or medical coverage by returning to work. These disincentives are removed for VISTA members, because the VISTA subsistence allowance does not in any way reduce or eliminate the level of, or eligibility for, assistance the member may receive under any governmental program, including disability assistance. This gives these individuals an opportunity to develop work habits and history without losing benefits.

Accommodations for persons with disabilities often are a concern to prospective employers. Over the past five years, five of the six VISTA members who have served at ASCC have been persons with disabilities. The national Job Accommodation Network (JAN) estimates that 80% of all job accommodations cost \$50 or less, and this proved true in almost every case for the ASCC. Desks were

raised with wooden blocks obtained from a local lumber yard refuse pile, and reachers to access books on high shelves were purchased for \$15. The most expensive purchase was a \$132 TDD machine for a VISTA member to have at his desk. Working with the VISTA members, accommodation solutions were simple and inexpensive.

The results of the VISTA projects with ASCC have been exceptional. For example:

- A corps of trained peer consultants is available to meet with newly injured individuals throughout the state.
- A training program is in place to teach people who use wheelchairs how to do basic maintenance and repairs on them.
- The Education and Resource Center on Spinal Cord Injuries is available and serves 20 to 30 requests for resources and information per month.
- There is an equipment recycling center that repairs, refurbishes, and recycles used durable medical equipment to clients in need.
- A VISTA member is establishing the agency's Web site.

"Each of our VISTA volunteers has brought unique skills and experience to our agency," reports Cheryl Vines, Executive Director of ASCC. "From each of them we have gained insight in meeting needs of our population and in the values of their diversity. Our agency has grown, thanks to the involvement of these dedicated volunteers."

For more information on recruiting VISTA members with disabilities, contact Cheryl Vines at 501-296-1788, or fax to 501-296-1787. ■

3

Do not focus on the disability, but on the individual and the issue at hand.

5

4

If you are uncertain about what to do, ask. Most people would rather answer a question about protocol than be in an uncomfortable situation.

Helping Students Understand about Disabilities Experientially

By Joann Simpson, Program Director, Mount Vernon Each One Counts Corps, Fortville, Indiana

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Don't worry about what to call someone. All people with disabilities have names.

One of the missions of the AmeriCorps program at Mount Vernon Community Schools in Fortville, Indiana, is to help students with disabilities become fully included in the academic, social, and physical life of the regular education classroom. When the local special education cooperative made the decision to have a disabilities awareness fair at the elementary school, the Mount Vernon Each One Counts Corps enthusiastically agreed to be a partner.

Plans began in the fall for the week-long fair scheduled for May. These months were needed for preparation as details were ironed out, speakers were lined up, and the booths were designed. Teachers and AmeriCorps members worked together on the project, setting up each booth station in the school's gym.

The Disabilities Awareness Fair

On Monday through Thursday of fair week, students visited the booths during their physical education period. When each class came into the gym, a volunteer gave them a brief introduction along with rules for the period. Students were divided into groups to rotate through all the stations, allowing ten minutes per station. The booths were staffed by high school students and community volunteers recruited by AmeriCorps members. Detailed instructions were left at each booth so that volunteers would be able to put the students through certain awareness exercises.

Each booth had a challenge for the students to consider—trying to see through vision-distorting lenses, performing simple tasks blindfolded, writing a word without using



Students attempt puzzles while blindfolded or wearing goggles covered with layers of plastic wrap.

their hands, fingerspelling their names using the sign language alphabet, and trying to use crutches and wheelchairs. The physical education teacher set up a special obstacle course where students crawled through tunnels without using their hands. The school's art teacher had students draw pictures while watching their hands in a mirror to help them understand the difficulties students with dyslexia experience.

For the final day of the fair on Friday, speakers were brought in for four presentations, each on subjects such as autism, blindness, Tourettes Syndrome, and physical disabilities. Several of the speakers were people with disabilities, and the sessions proved to be especially popular and effective. Classes were rotated so that everyone heard all of the speakers. After the presentations, the school's PTA provided a luncheon for the speakers, and the students decorated the paper table cloths. Later students wrote thank you notes to those who helped.

The strong collaborative effort between the school and teachers, the special education cooperative, and the AmeriCorps program, which helped generate volunteers and contacts with local agencies and resource people, resulted in a successful and memorable week. While students were given the opportunity to experience some of the frustrations of having a disability, they also learned that disabilities can be overcome, and that it is okay to be different.

For information about setting up disability booths and other resources, contact the AmeriCorps program, Each One Counts Corps, at 317-485-3109. ■



High school student Nicole Byers encourages a student moving through the tunnel without the use of arms.

6

6

Remember that people with disabilities are interested in the same topics of conversation as people with no disabilities.

RSVP: Productive Members with Limited Vision

By Edith Celley, Director, RSVP of the New Hampshire Upper Valley and White Mountains

They may not see well, but their services are still valuable assets to their community. Cora Munsey, 91, and Dick Abbott, 78, developed macular degeneration at almost the same time four years ago. Macular degeneration is a condition, usually age-related, that affects the retina and causes blurring, distortion, or a blind spot. Both Cora and Dick are active members of the RSVP Advisory Council and both have continued with their community service projects. Each has had training to help them meet life's new challenges. Dick was eligible for a residential program offered by the Veterans Administration, which taught him many ways of managing tasks requiring vision. Cora has been similarly aided by the New Hampshire State Office of Sight Services for Independent Living.

Although Cora had delivered meals to the homebound for several years, she now concentrates on service as a peer counselor with Sight Services for Independent Living. Many elderly people with the same disease have learned from her that they are not alone in their situation and that there are techniques

to learn which can help them deal with their condition. This very upbeat 91-year-old woman is an inspiration to others, providing support and valuable information.

Dick teaches decision-making life skills and self-esteem to prisoners, probationers, and teen parents as part of North County Thresholds and Decisions. This all-volunteer, non-profit agency sponsored by RSVP was established by Dick and his wife Betty eight years ago. His work has helped many young adults turn their lives around and avoid further problems or legal conflicts. He also serves through his church in the KAIROS Program at New Hampshire State Prison and as a counselor with Sight Services for Independent Living.

For further information on recruiting and working with Senior Corps members with disabilities, contact Anne Ostberg, Program Officer, National Senior Service Corps, at 202-606-5000, ext. 292, or email: aostberg@cns.gov ■

7

Use a normal speaking tone and style. If someone needs you to speak in a louder voice, he or she will ask you to do so.

Appropriate Language: It's the Person First, and Then the Disability

Adapted from a printout by PACER Center, Inc.

Say...

person with a disability
person with cerebral palsy
person who has...
without speech, nonverbal
developmental delay
emotional disorder, or mental illness
deaf or hearing impaired
uses a wheelchair
person with retardation
person with epilepsy
with Down's Syndrome
has a learning disability
nondisabled
condition
seizures
mobility impaired
paralyzed

Instead of...

disabled or handicapped person
palsied, CP
afflicted, suffers from, victim
mute or dumb
slow
crazy or insane
deaf and dumb
confined to a wheelchair
retarded
epileptic
mongoloid
is learning disabled
normal, healthy
disease (unless it is a disease)
fits
lame
invalid or paralytic

8

Remember that people with disabilities, like all people, are experts on themselves. They know what they like, what they don't like, and what they can and cannot do.

7

Learn and Serve Takes Off with Project SUCCESS

By Molly Brannon, Project Director, United Cerebral Palsy/Project SUCCESS

9

People with disabilities in national service programs are there because they have a commitment to "Getting Things Done" and to national and community service. Ensure that your attitudes do not prevent that from happening.

8

10

As with all other etiquette issues, when mistakes are made, apologize, correct the problem, learn from the mistake, and move on.

Historically, youth with disabilities have been seen as the recipients of service and rarely as service providers. Perhaps because of this myopic viewpoint, many young people have not felt motivated to access the valuable personal and professional opportunities available from the experience of serving. A new community-based demonstration project designed by United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) gives a voice to this untapped national resource, and offers pre-teens and teens a chance to experience the benefits of volunteerism.

In October 1997, UCP launched Project SUCCESS, with funding from Learn and Serve America at the Corporation for National Service. Project SUCCESS engages middle and high school-aged youth with and without disabilities in a service-learning curriculum, which addresses teambuilding, diversity, effective communication skills, attitude awareness, personal responsibility, civic leadership, and community service.

Although still in its infancy, Project SUCCESS has received overwhelmingly positive support from public school systems, local and national organizations, and the service community. As with any program geared toward youth, project leaders anticipate challenges related to accommodating diverse backgrounds and abilities, particularly when working with local partner organizations. But Project SUCCESS lessens these challenges by using a team approach, where participants on the team are equal contributors, regardless of their individual ability or personal experience. Through Project SUCCESS, teens learn to celebrate diversity while working together to make each student's service meaningful.

In this first year, Project SUCCESS is being implemented in three of UCP's affiliate offices. The participating sites are UCP of Pittsburgh, UCP of Washington, D.C. and Northern Virginia, and UCP of San Diego. Over the next three years, Project SUCCESS will engage approximately 1,000 youth with and without disabilities in community service, adding five sites for a total of eight across the country. Through this project, many young people will have the opportunity to make a positive difference in their own communities.

Project SUCCESS



Creating Change Through
Community Service

For more information about Project SUCCESS, contact Molly Brannon, National Project Director, at 800-872-5827 or by email at mbrannon@ucpa.org ■

State Commissions: Using Strategies for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in National Service Programs

With contributions from Maria Vail, Disability Coordinator, California State Commission, and Laura White, Disability Coordinator, Maryland's Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism

Funding has been allotted to State Commissions for assisting AmeriCorps*state and national direct programs in paying for accommodations for persons with disabilities. While this is a relatively new area of focus, there are Commissions which have a good grasp on the importance of outreach and recruitment of members with disabilities. The following are what two State Commissions are doing in an effort to assure member diversity.

California State Commission

One of the goals for Maria Vail, Disability Coordinator for the California State Commission, is to provide information on the opportunities available in AmeriCorps to organizations where persons with disabilities might access it. These include Independent Living Centers and offices of disability on college campuses. While she doesn't recruit people into specific programs, she does tell prospective members how to locate programs and who to contact.

In addition to getting the word out concerning what AmeriCorps has to offer, the California Commission provides training workshops for AmeriCorps programs, which include state competitive and national direct programs (State Commissions can use PDAT funds for formula programs). These trainings are interactive, and include collaboration with the World Institute on Disability (WID) (see article, "Creating a Diverse Team," page 2) and the California Department of Rehabilitation, provide information about issues involving persons with disabilities, including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The workshops also serve to increase awareness of disability issues, and encourage a basic understanding of the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from full participation in society. The trainings also provide information on how programs can access both

monetary and technical assistance in providing reasonable accommodations for members.

The number of persons with disabilities who have joined AmeriCorps programs has increased significantly in California, yet none has required major accommodations. Thus far, only minor modifications such as a change of schedule, transportation outside of normal areas of duty, and an assistant for an overnight event have been needed.

Maryland Governor's Commission on Service

Laura White has been the Disability Coordinator for the Maryland Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism for seven months. She has been working to educate program directors about recruiting persons with disabilities as well as informing

various relevant organizations about national service. The Commission has provided trainings for program directors and has linked them with the Maryland State Department of Rehabilitation.

Training topics include recruitment, facts and definitions about disability, what the term "reasonable accommodations" means, and how to request funding and help in accommodating a member with disabilities.

In addition to educating those in AmeriCorps programs, the Commission has approached organizations that work with persons with disabilities and has obtained permission to place classified ads in several newsletters and newspapers about AmeriCorps as an option for everyone. From these classifieds, the Commission developed a list of prospective members, and information was sent to each person on the list regarding how and where they might join a program. Twenty people have been interviewed thus far, and there is optimism that

The number of persons with disabilities who have joined AmeriCorps programs has increased significantly in California, yet none has required major accommodations.

Myths & Facts

Taken from an Easter Seals handout from The First Step campaign

Myth:

People with disabilities are brave and courageous.

Fact:

Adjusting to a disability actually requires adapting to a lifestyle, not bravery and courage.

Myth:

Wheelchair use is confining; users of wheelchairs are "wheelchair bound."

Fact:

A wheelchair, like a bicycle or a car, is a personal assistive device that enables someone to get around.

Making Your Web Site Universally Accessible

By Ian Shearer, Information Specialist, National Service Resource Center, ETR Associates

Myth:

All persons with hearing disabilities can read lips.

Fact:

Lipreading skill varies greatly among people who use it and is never wholly reliable.

There are many ways in which you can make your Web pages more accessible to people with disabilities. Many of these techniques will also make your pages much easier to download and read for people who browse the Web using older hardware and software or using Lynx, a text only browser. Together these are known as universal access techniques.

One of these techniques is adding a text description of graphic images so that text readers will have an idea of the visual content of the Web page. The HTML source code uses

the "ALT" tag. For example, the HTML code for a graphic on a Web page would look like this: ``. Another simple technique is to provide an alternative text link for every clickable graphic that is used as a link. Without these, a text-only Web browser cannot navigate your site. The following list of Web sites are just a few that provide universal access. Most of them offer more links to additional universal access resources and other sites related to disabilities and adaptive and assistive technology.

Adobe Acrobat Access

<http://access.adobe.com/>

This server allows you to convert any PDF file found on the Internet to HTML, which can then be read easily with Lynx or a screen reader.

BOBBY

<http://www.cast.org/bobby/>

A free Web-based service HTML validator that will check the accessibility of your Web pages. It will also find compatibility problems that prevent pages from displaying correctly on different Web browsers.

Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)

<http://www.cast.org/>

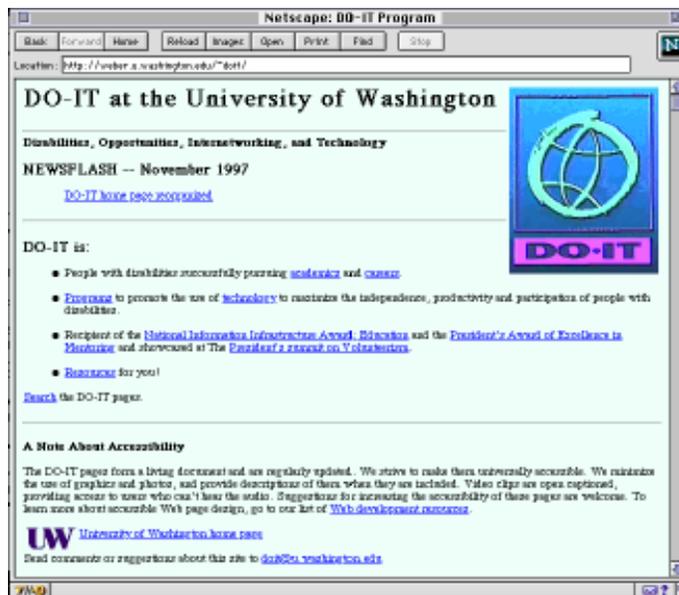
The organization that provides the BOBBY service. They also have many other resources on universal access.

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology)

<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~doit/>

A comprehensive listing of Web resources

for universal access Web design, adaptive technology, and other disability-related resources.



Provides many resources and Web links on universal access Web design and serving people with disabilities.

Lynx-Me

<http://ugweb.cs.ualberta.ca/%7Egerald/lynx-me.cgi>

Utility which shows you what your Web page will look like in Lynx, the most common text-only Web browser.

Starling Access Services

<http://www.igs.net/~starling/acc/index.htm>

A thorough guide to accessible Web design. ■

Equal Access to Software and Information (EASI)

<http://www.rit.edu/~easi/access.html>

Myth:

Curious children should never be allowed to ask people about their disabilities.

Fact:

Many children have a natural, uninhibited curiosity and ask questions that some adults might find embarrassing. But scolding children for asking questions may make them think there is something "bad" about having a disability. Most people with disabilities won't mind answering a child's question.

Library Spotlight: Disability Issues

The following materials are new acquisitions from the National Service Resource Center library. For a complete listing of resources on disability issues available from the library, see the *Library Catalog March 1998*, and look in the subject index under Disability Issues, or check NSRC's Web site at www.etr.org/NSRC/

AmeriCorps: Persons with Disabilities, Getting Things Done

United Cerebral Palsy, 1996
V0075, 12 minute video

Shows how people with disabilities can make a profound difference in peoples' lives through AmeriCorps service work. Footage includes a person with cerebral palsy working with elderly and sick "locked in" patients, and a person who is deaf being part of a team that restores old houses and provides AIDS educational outreach to the deaf community.

Note: Extra copies of this video are available from the Mississippi Industries for the Blind. Their number is 601-984-3200.

Best Practices: Strategies that Enhance Supported Employment

Hess, Amy, et al., 1997
R0528, 116 pages

Manual designed to address various issues of concern for employment for people with disabilities. Includes areas such as adaptive aids and technology, corporate partnerships, school-to-work transitions, and staff training.

Bridges to Accessibility

Project Adventure, Inc., Dubuque, IA
Havens, Mark D., 1992
C0189, 130 pages

Provides information on including and supporting persons with disabilities in Project Adventure and other programs designed to challenge individuals to take more risks and groups to function more effectively together. Includes sections on personal reflection and awareness, applying accessible adventure curriculum, and sample task analysis, including ropes course elements.

Dealing With Differences: Taking Action on Class, Race, Gender, and Disability

Corwin Press, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA
Ellis, Angele and Llewellyn, Marilyn, 1997
C0190, 158 pages

Classroom guide dealing with issues and prejudice around class, race, gender, and disability. Contains 48 lesson plans that provide guidelines for group interaction, interactive exercises and discussion topics, and activities for students to take action in their school and community.

In My Shoes: Person Centered Services and Support

La Pinte, Linda L. and Janelle F. Olson
K0022

Board game designed as a training tool for those who work with people with developmental disabilities in community programs. Appropriate for orientation for new staff, specific skill training, and ongoing staff development.

Small Differences: A Children's Disability Awareness Production

Braddock Films, Inc.
Allegheny County/City of Pittsburgh Task Force on Disabilities, 1995
V0158, 20 minute video

Disability awareness video made by, for, and about children. Includes a study guide for age-appropriate discussion questions for children ages 5 through 8, 9 through 12, and teenagers through adults.

Variability Not Disability: Struggling Readers in a Workshop Classroom

Roller, Cathy M., 1996
International Reading Association,
Newark, DE
R0551, 160 pages

Describes how to implement a reading program that is flexible enough to accommodate the wide variations of students' abilities. Provides a day-to-day instructional framework which focuses on seeking out, reinforcing, and building on the capability of struggling readers.

Working Out: Disabilities in the Workplace

Films for the Humanities & Sciences,
Princeton, NJ, 1996
V0159, 24 minute video

Follows four individuals with disabilities as they meet the challenge of finding and maintaining employment. Promotes the development and growth of supportive employment within the community. ■

Myth:

Most people with disabilities always need help.

Fact:

Many people with disabilities are quite independent, but if you want to help someone with a disability, ask first if they need it. ■



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Will Morales

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out my life in this dark, bitter world I created, or I could choose to take definitive steps to change the influences around me so that, in turn, my life would also change.

I began volunteering for the ILC. At first I was doing a lot of research on a new law that had recently been signed, the Americans with Disabilities Act. I wrote and called the local businesses about their accessibility. During this time, other people with disabilities would come to the office seeking services. The director, who had become my mentor, would sometimes give me a hypothetical situation for feedback on how I would address or respond to it.

I eventually became a paid staff member, and during that time grew both personally and professionally. Most of my time there was spent providing peer support to the visitors of the Center. In understanding what people with disabilities were feeling and why, I assisted many in getting past the anger and fears, to focus on changing their tomorrows.

Some went to school and others sought volunteer positions. I had found my calling. It was a sad day for me when I left the Center, but I wanted and needed to grow even more.

I now have a new focus as project director for Access AmeriCorps, a cooperative agreement between United Cerebral Palsy Associations and the Corporation for National Service to provide training and technical assistance on the inclusion of people with disabilities in AmeriCorps programs. I have the opportunity to encourage people with disabilities to take an active role in changing the stereotypical thinking that they are “takers” who don’t give anything back. The skills and experience gained will not only enlighten and strengthen them, but will also guide and mentor others to greatness.

People with disabilities can be givers, contributors, leaders, and mentors—“People with disabilities are getting things done.”

For more information on recruiting AmeriCorps members with disabilities, contact Will Morales at 202-776-0406. ■

State Commissions

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this will increase as the information filters out to the population.

The Maryland Commission has created a resource list for their AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve, and SeniorCorps programs for resources regarding reasonable accommodations. These community and state resources support programs with accommodation issues such as alternative communication formats for individuals who are visually impaired, and captioning for individuals who are hearing impaired. The resource list provides information on independent living centers, rehabilitation hospitals, sign language interpreting, and TTY machines.

What You Can Do to Be Informed

Check with your State Commission to find out if there are trainings regarding ADA compliance and recruitment of members with disabilities. Inquire about funds available to assist in paying for accommodations.

The following list of agencies and their phone numbers can provide information on ADA requirements in various areas:

U.S. Department of Justice ADA Information Line

To obtain answers to general and technical questions about the ADA and to order technical assistance materials: 800-514-0301 (voice), 800-514-0383 (TDD).

Access Board

For information on the ADA Accessibility Guidelines: 800-872-2253 (voice and TDD), or visit their Web site: <http://www.access-board.gov/>

Job Accommodation Network

For additional ADA information and referral sources from federally-funded grantees: 800-526-7234 (voice and TDD), or visit their Web site: <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/english/homeus.htm> ■