



Statewide Independent Living Council

P. O. Box 625 • Institute, West Virginia 25112-0625

2013 Disability History Essay Contest

The SILC was again very proud to co-sponsor, along with the WV State Rehabilitation Council, the 2013 West Virginia Disability History Essay Contest. The contest is open to all high school seniors in the state and cash prizes awarded are thanks to a generous grant from the WV Division of Rehabilitation Services.

The theme for 2013 was **“How the disability rights movement has shaped our world”** and 58 entries were received from across the state. Students entering the contest competed for a chance at the State Winner Prize, and 6 District level First and Second Prizes. We are very pleased to share the winning essays with you in this special edition of the newsletter and that the contest continues to grow each year!

This contest helps to increase knowledge and understanding of the disability rights movement while providing high school seniors with a chance to earn cash prizes. The entries received demonstrated that we achieved those goals, at least with some students. It was particularly nice to present the awards at the Senior Awards Ceremonies at the high schools, giving status to and increasing awareness of the contest.

The Disability History Essay Contest highlights Disability History Week in West Virginia. Disability History Week was the result of the efforts of the 16-21 old delegates to the 2005 Youth Disability Caucus. These youth were amazed by the history of the Disability Rights Movement and were determined to do something to ensure all West Virginia students had the opportunity to learn this history.

Their efforts resulted in the passage of legislation establishing the third week of October as Disability History Week in West Virginia and requiring that instruction be provided in all public schools, K-12, about disabilities, disability history, and the disability rights movement. This was the first such recognition in the US and many other states have followed suit establishing a disability history week or disability history month of their own.

Ann McDaniel
Executive Director

What's New

Page 2: State Winner
Page 3: District 1, 1st Place
Page 4: District 1, 2nd Place
Page 5: District 3, 1st Place
Page 6: District 3, 2nd Place
Page 7: District 4, 1st Place
Page 8: District 4, 2nd Place
Page 9: District 5, 1st Place
Page 10: District 5, 2nd Place
Page 11: District 6, 1st Place
Page 12: District 6, 2nd Place
Page 13-21: Essays continued

WVSILC

P.O. Box 625
Institute, WV 25112-0625
www.wvsilc.org
Phone: 304-766-4624
Toll Free: 855-855-9743

WVCILs

Appalachian CIL:

Elk Office Center
4710 Chimney Dr.
Charleston, WV 25302
1-800-642-3003

Mountain State CIL:

821 Fourth Ave.
Huntington, WV 25701
1-866-687-8245

329 Prince St.
Beckley, WV 25801
304-255-0122

Northern WV CIL:

601-603 East Brockway Ave.
Suite A & B
Morgantown, WV 26505
1-800-834-6408

109 Randolph Ave.
Elkins, WV 26241
304-636-0143



Alexandra Nicole Rundle

2013 State Winner (\$2000)

The 2013 State Winner of \$2000 is Alexandra Nicole Rundle. She attends WVU studying Pre-Forensics and is holding a 3.0 GPA. She continues to volunteer in her community on several venues. Alexandra is a part time student worker at WVU in the Career services office where she assists students with a variety of needs including referrals to the disability services office.

East Fairmont High School

East Fairmont High School was organized in 1917 with 71 students and 2 instructors in a 2-room basement known as Central School. In 1921, East Side High opened its doors to 268 students and 11 teachers to begin the history of what is now East Fairmont High School. By 1924, enrollment increased and construction began on one of two additional wings which was completed in 1925. A new gymnasium was built in 1930, but it was 22 years before the second wing was added. In the fall of 1993, East Fairmont High moved to our current facility located off Airport Road.

Alexandra Nicole Rundle

East Fairmont High School

Being an individual with a significant disability at an early age, my first computation was that only the small percentage of people with a disability had any knowledge or even cared about the disability movement. A movement that has shaped our society and opened many doors to promote access to services and supports in our great country for all individuals with disabilities. I spend many of weeks in the children's hospital receiving treatments for my illness.

At the age of two my ordeal began. Yes it is true that during this period, I could not grasp much of what was going on around me or how it affected my entire family. I could recall my brother, mother, father, grandparents and relatives gathered around me trying to comfort my every minute. As I got older, I learned more and more about advocacy skills, disability rights and the disability movement that had begun many years ago. A movement that surely made my young life easier related to accessing health care and my educational needs. I also learned that over time more and more individuals have made a positive commitment to change.

It has now been over 20 years since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Through the determination and drive of families and individuals with a passion for equality and independence, more and more people have learned about the challenges and tributes of those that have fought the fight and I continue to learn and live independently.

At the time, I could not imagine a grown man, a man that just wanted to go to college like anybody else, fighting so hard for what he wanted. This man, Ed Roberts also had a dream. He had to leave his sole means of independence at the time, his wheelchair to be carried thru the doors of a college that he so desperately wanted to attend. Also facing other barriers, he agreed to live in a segregated section of the campus due the use of his iron lung and became the first quadriplegic to go to college even earning his Masters Degree. His legacy made it possible for others to achieve their dreams. There was no accessible entrance at the time and barriers still existed; but for him and many others a larger door was opened. For many at the time, there was no equal respect, no access to services for whom many were called "handicapped", but time will change and change it did.

I attribute most of my knowledge to my Father. He has spent most of his life and career helping others. He has worked as an Advocate in many systems of care. I recall him being away from home all the time. As time went on I understood why. He

(see Rundle on p14)



Mandee Studivon Ripley High School

Until today, I don't think I realized how much the Disability Rights Movement influenced or affected my life. I have been surrounded by very strong willed people who chose to move forward and adapt in spite of their disabilities.

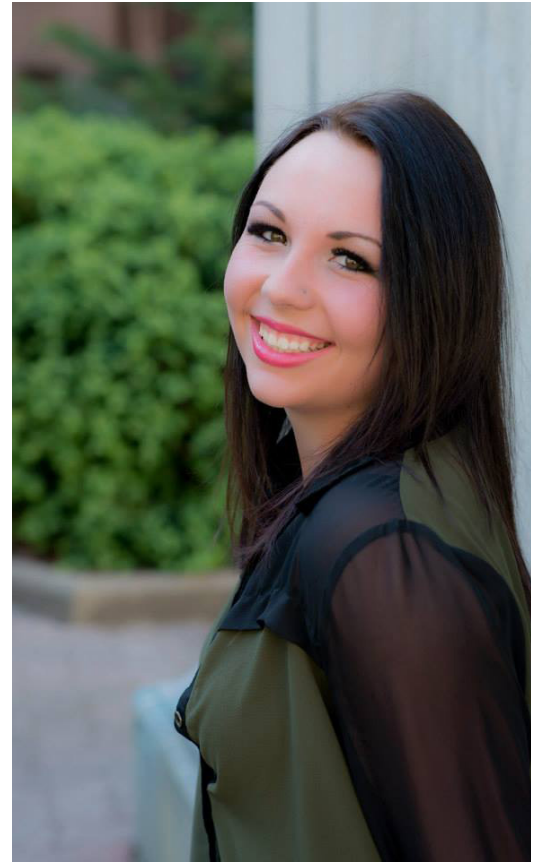
My paternal grandfather was born November 18, 1942. He was stricken with Polio at 8 years of age leaving him completely deaf. During that time disabilities were hidden and people were made to feel less than normal. At that time all people with hearing and sight imparities were sent to the WV School for the Deaf and Blind. This means he would have been sent to live away from his family.

Because of this, his family chose to send him to regular school and he basically hid his disability. He did not learn sign language because it was not something that was not available in the public school system. Instead he learned to read the lips of people as they spoke. Most of his teachers and peers didn't realize the extent of his disability because he covered it up. He did attend the school for deaf and blind after he graduated from high school. This was because he was felt to believe he could not attend a regular college in order to obtain a degree. He was encouraged to believe he could only hold a blue collar or trades type of employment.

My grandfather did hold a job for more than 20 years as a mail clerk. During his marriage to my grandmother, she and my father became his primary communication to the outside world. During 2008, my grandfather, grandmother and father all became very ill. At one point my grandfather was in the hospital while my grandmother was confined to a nursing home and my father was unable to visit him. In my mind his medical care truly suffered as he could not effectively communicate with the hospital staff. My grandfather passed away on December 20, 2008 and my grandmother passed away one week later. Sadly enough my father also passed away 21 days later.

In my mind, if the disabilities act had been more prominent at the time, my grandfather would not have been made to feel embarrassed by his disability. He would have instead been empowered to learn to communicate with the hearing world. Perhaps with this knowledge he could have received better care and understood what was going on around him. I feel that the knowledge and power of the disability act for those affected with disabilities allows them to thrive and succeed in today's world. In today's word people have many opportunities to educate and empower themselves in spite of their disabilities.

(see Studivon on p15)



Mandee Studivon

2013 District 1 First Place (\$1000)

The 2013 District 1 First Place Winner of \$1000 is Mandee Studivon a graduate of Ripley High School. While attending high school, Mandee was in band, mu alpha theta and national honor society. She is currently a student at Marshall University majoring in biology. Her future plans include attending medical school or possibly becoming a cosmetic chemist.

Ripley High School

Ripley High School graduated its first class in 1921 in Ripley, WV and is a part of the Jackson County School system. The school consists of grades 9-12 with a population of around 1000 students and 90 staff and faculty. The school colors are royal blue and white and the Viking is the mascot.



Kensey Bergdorf

2013 District 1 Second Place (\$500)

The 2013 District 1 Second Place Winner of \$500 is Kensey Bergdorf. Kensey Bergdorf, daughter of Erin Mullins-Frashier and Justin Frashier, is a freshman Immunology and Medical Microbiology major at West Virginia University. Kensey graduated from Ripley High School as valedictorian and was named a Foundation Scholar at WVU. While at Ripley High School, Kensey participated in a wide variety of activities, including three varsity sports, Student Council, FFA, HOBY, Rhododendron Girls' State, and the National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine. She was awarded the President's Service Award two years in a row and obtained her FFA State Degree after taking hogs to the county fair. Kensey's future goals include attending medical school and becoming either an infectious disease specialist or a surgeon.

Ripley High School

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Kensey Bergdorf

Ripley High School

Walk down Main Street in your hometown. Order your Big Mac with a large sweet tea. Shop at your local grocery store. These are things Americans do every day. Imagine barring a certain group of people from enjoying these simple pleasures. It seems that such a practice would be frowned upon in America, but it is exactly what society did to the disabled until the disability rights movement of the 1960s.

The disability rights movement spawned from the success of both the women's rights movement and civil rights movements, both of which occurred earlier in the century. The central focus of the movement was to bring equality to the physically and mentally disabled in the workforce and education, but active participation in society and accessibility were also advocated.

Prior to the movement, the mentally disabled had little choice in their lives. They were most often institutionalized, and in-home care was a rarity. They were often abused or neglected throughout their lives, through practices such as unnecessary restraint, seclusion, threats, unsanitary conditions, and lack of patient consent before practices. Educational opportunities were few, and those offered were very limited. The mentally handicapped were put out of society and prevented from even attempting a normal life.

The physically handicapped found just as many limitations placed upon them. Sidewalks were too narrow for wheelchairs, many buildings did not offer elevators, there were no ramps to enter buildings, and most businesses did not have a way to communicate with the deaf or mute. Society essentially segregated these individuals. Some homes were even built with hallways were too narrow for wheelchair access, so handicapped individuals living in those homes were Edward Roberts began the independent living movement, a subgroup of the disability rights movement, in California in the 1960s. Roberts and his fellow wheelchair-users claimed that they knew their needs, thus they knew the needs of the disabled. Their work led to the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, which is considered the first federal disability rights legislation. The act states that federal facilities and buildings built with federal money must be, accessible to those with physical handicaps.

With the success of Roberts' group, others sprang up throughout America. The American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities staged a nationwide sit-in of government buildings in 1977 in



Jenna Mason

Oak Glen High School

If one flips through the pages of any American History book, one would find chapters dedicated to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s for the African Americans. The stories of how African Americans suffered for their rights are almost common knowledge because leaders like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. are historic heroes. However, this is not so for the disability rights movement. One would find few pages dedicated to this movement. Names like Ed Roberts and Judy Heumann are not so common, but these two individuals played just as important of a role in changing history as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King Jr. The movement led by Mr. Roberts, Ms. Heumann, and others like them changed the course of American history. Thanks to the efforts of many citizens, acts have been passed by Congress that has changed the lives of people with disabilities significantly, including that of my Aunt Linda.

Before the Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1973, people with disabilities lived rough lives. Often times, individuals with disabilities were not only viewed as incompetent or feeble-minded but as less than human. Very few accommodations were made to meet the needs of these people. For example, buildings did not have passable doorways or restrooms for those who used wheelchairs. Children with special needs did not receive the opportunity to get an education like other students. In fact, many were placed in institutions where they would stay away from those who were viewed as normal. Sadly, the common philosophy was to keep them out of sight and out of mind. There were a few prominent people who set out on the daunting task to change the ideals of citizens and of Congress. A man by the name of Ed Roberts, who had overcome serious obstacles of having polio and becoming a quadriplegic, was among one of the most influential people in the movement. He was among the first people with disabilities to attend college. "Roberts and fellow disability rights leaders would challenge widely held myths that people with disabilities were incapable of being educated, working, caring for themselves, or becoming contributing members of society". Judy Heumann also made significant strides in fighting for rights of those with disabilities. Ms. Heumann formed a group called Disabled in Action which held protests to gain support against employment discrimination.

Change didn't come quickly. A few acts were passed in Congress such as the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This act, gave partial rights to people with disabilities, but it was not the complete freedom so many wished for.



Jenna Mason

2013 District 3 First Place (\$1000)

The 2013 District 3 First Place Winner of \$1000 is Jenna Mason, a 2014 graduate of Oak Glen High School. She was a member of National Honor Society, was elected to attend the Hugh O'Brian Leadership Conference and participated in Leadership Weirton. She was also a member of Key Club, Culture Club, Business and Pep Clubs and received the WV Promise Scholarship. She played soccer and was on the Tennis team. She is employed at Mountaineer Race Track and Gaming Resort and attends WV Northern Community College. She plans to pursue a degree in Nursing.

Oak Glen High School

Oak Glen High School is located in rural Hancock County, West Virginia and has been serving students and the community since 1963. OGHS strives to become a community of learners, creating learning opportunities for each and every student.



Shelby Sands

2013 District 3 Second Place (\$500)

The 2013 District 3 Second Place Winner of \$500 is Shelby Sands, a 2014 graduate of Magnolia High School. Currently, she is a freshmen at West Liberty University majoring in Elementary Education with a minor in Early Education. She is also a member of the Hilltopper Color Guard and participates in the band. In her free time, Shelby enjoys reading and spending time with friends.

Magnolia High School

The instructional program of Magnolia High School is built upon the concept that the 21st Century is one of technology, change, and diversity. A comprehensive curriculum design must provide rigor and relevance. The needs of all students within the school's geographic area must be met to the fullest extent possible. This is accomplished through the content curriculum, vocational education, and special programs for exceptional students. Challenging curricular offerings at all levels and socially rewarding experiences are provided through this program design. Evaluative procedures utilized by teachers and counselors identify student differences.

Shelby Sands

Magnolia High School

The Disability Rights Movement in America has had a long and difficult time in reaching its potential. Before Americans can see where the movement is taking our society, we must look at the past and see how far we have come. The pioneers that settled in our land were hindered by those with physical ailments, and perhaps saw these individuals as a burden. The early American settlers had to overcome many obstacles such as a wild and unsettled land, the last thing they needed was someone who did not pull their own weight and require financial assistance from others. Often individuals with disabilities, either physical or mental were not permitted to immigrate into any of the early colonies.

Individuals with disabilities were shunned, and treated with inequality by members outside of their immediate family. The family members were often the ones who kept the individual with disabilities especially with mental illness; family members kept these individuals at home behind closed doors hidden from others. During the pioneer days health care was almost non-existent, diseases were common and living conditions were very poor. Over the next two hundred years, America has had some wonderful changes in how we view and treat those with disabilities. We elected an American President, Franklin Roosevelt in the 1930's who was physically disabled, and in the late 1990's a physically disabled individual, Senator Robert Dole ran for president. These two men are just two examples of America's progress toward the disability movement. It is more than just the passage of legislation, or the acceptance of those who are different than us.

Just like the civil rights movement for minorities, the Disability Rights Movement has helped shape our American society- Our society has changed its approach to those with disabilities. The disability rights movement has shaped our world in four big ways. The first way is the way laws have addressed a variety of issues such as building structures and discrimination. Most community buildings must be handicapped accessible. We now have ramps, elevators, parking spaces and even specialized bathroom areas. This is a physical change in our world.

The second change involves the educational realm. Now all educational institutions offer an equal opportunity in all education for children and adults. Our society has spent lots of money and time making curriculum and accommodations for those with disabilities. In return this has helped all individuals the opportunity to help shape America and our world.



District 4: First Place

Miriam Cook

Nicholas County High School

The Disability Rights Movement shaped my world. I know firsthand the value of equal opportunities in the life of a person who is labeled as disabled in our society. Two family members, whom I love dearly, were born with physical and mental challenges. One was my Uncle, who died several years ago. The other is my Cousin who is a thriving young adult in his community. Through their lives, I have gained a wealth of knowledge and compassion for the continued advocacy of acceptance, accessibility, and equality for people with disabilities. In this essay I will compare and contrast my Uncle's and Cousin's lives and how changing legislation, funding, and opportunities through the Disability Rights Movement shaped their worlds.

My Uncle was born in the early 1950s before the Movement's emergence in the 1960s. When my Uncle was born society was not enlightened to the abilities of persons who are not born "normal". As a result, my Uncle did not receive the benefits of early childhood interventions, equal education opportunities, and community support programs. The medical professionals at the time recommended institutional care for my Uncle. There were no Respite Care programs, social service caseworkers, or charitable groups funded to assist our family with his changing needs.

Then, in the 1980s, following the significant disability rights legislation of the 1970s, my Uncle's life changed dramatically. At the institution my Uncle had learned basic life skills and self-care. As a result, he was assigned a county case management worker who offered him a planned transition to community living in a supervised group home with paid assisted care. Although my Uncle experienced some challenging days the work done by the Disability Rights Movement gave him the gift of self-determination, access to sheltered workshop employment, a measure of financial independence, assisted transportation and accessibility to the shopping, worship, and leisure activities many of us take for granted.

In contrast, my Cousin's life began in a different way. When he was born in the 1990s the work of the Disability Rights Movement had been paving a path more than thirty years before to secure equal opportunities and equal rights for him. Medical professionals immediately networked him and his parents to numerous support groups, early intervention programs, state-of-the-art physical therapy clinics, and health care providers. Although the diagnosis of "disability" was difficult at first, my Cousin's life held numerous options and a more positive outlook.



Miriam Cook

2013 District 4 First Place (\$1000)

The 2013 District 4 First Place Winner of \$1000 is Miriam Cook. She is currently attending West Virginia Wesleyan College where she plans to get her degree in Elementary Education with an endorsement in Mathematics and a Masters Degree in Special Education. In high school, she was the Vice President of Student Council during her senior year, a member of National Honor Society Junior and Senior year, held weekly Young Life meetings at her house, tutored children during the school's after-school program, graduated with honors and received the Promise Scholarship.

Nicholas County High School

The Mission of Nicholas County High School is to provide a quality education that will allow all students to pursue a successful college career, vocational/technical training, military service opportunities or direct entry into the work force. We believe that with the ever changing economic environment, our students will be competitive through the advanced education and training that is synonymous with being a life-long learner. Above all, the faculty at Nicholas County High School will prepare our young men and women to be responsible, productive and self sufficient citizens who will better any community in which they live and work.



Kelsey Acree

2013 District 4 Winner (\$500)

The 2013 District 4 Winner of \$500 is Kelsey Acree of Nicholas County High School. She was a cheerleader, Secretary of National Honor Society and President of the senior float committee. She was also on the homecoming court and prom court. She lead a bible study and was on a youth worship team at her church. She plans on becoming a Doctor and eventually a Medical missionary to India.

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Kelsey Acree

Nicholas County High School

What is normal? According to dictionary.com, it is conforming to the standard or the common type, but who decided this common type? Who decided what is acceptable and what is unacceptable? From the very beginning society has labeled individuals with certain disabilities as abnormal. Along with this label came marginalization, stigmatization and cruelty. Today there are approximately 50 million disabled persons in the United States. While most see them as independent people who have a purpose, there are still the few that view them through ignorant eyes.

In the 1800's the majority of people viewed all disabled persons this way. They feared them because they were different. They forced them away from civilization and sent them to asylums and institutions, out of sight and therefore, out of mind. Some disabled persons spent their entire lives in institutions where they seldom received proper care and were often used for experimentation. If there were no available asylums or institutions, people with mental or physical disabilities were sent to hospitals or prisons. However, there were a few advancements made for people with disabilities. In the early 1800's the Braille system was invented leading to the establishment of schools for the blind. There were also some educational advances for deaf children as well. Despite these accomplishments, disabled persons were still viewed as useless and unfit for a "normal" life. Some disabled persons were even put in side-shows to be ridiculed by the public. Unfortunately, in the late 1800's the end of the Civil War resulted in many disabled veterans. These veterans were rewarded with little to no compensation for their efforts.

Harsh stereotypes and poor treatment continued into the 1900's with the Eugenio Sterilization Law, which gave hospitals the right to sterilize patients with physical or mental disabilities. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes stated, "Three generations of imbeciles are enough." However as time went on and more medical and technological advancements were made, people became more knowledgeable about disabilities. One significant medical advancement was made in 1927, when a team of Harvard medical researches invented a machine called "the iron lung". The iron lung was used for victims of chest paralysis resulting from polio. Along with medical advancements, the negative view of disabled persons began to change drastically when Franklin D. Roosevelt, who suffered from polio, was elected president in 1932.



Lakyn Nikole Dearnell

Tolsia High School

The world is constantly spinning like clay on a potter's wheel and people from all corners. Of the world are continuously sculpting society. Sometimes the changes we make don't create the masterpiece we were expecting; however, we don't toss out what we started. We reform the project and start spinning again. The disability rights movement has been spinning for decades. It has shaped our world in a positive way by providing opportunities for those who possess disabilities.

Up until the 1940s, people who suffered from disabilities were faced with cruel punishment. They were institutionalized, sterilized, and killed due to ignorance and fear of difference. Extremists, such as Hitler, believed that if we kept people with disabilities locked away, prevented them from reproducing or even killed them then we would have a more perfect society.

After World War II, this outlook quickly began to change. Veterans of World War II were bringing attention to the issue by demanding rehabilitation training. Most Americans supported the heroic veterans, because they were appreciative of their sacrifice for our country.

Access to education was a serious issue for children with disabilities up until the 1970s. They were not permitted to attend regular public school classes like other children. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was passed, which provided children with disabilities access to public school. This act was later renamed and expanded to allow disabled students to be included in regular classes unless their disability kept them from doing so.

Employment was also a concern for disabled citizens. They were discriminated against by employers and often were denied work because of their disabilities. This began to change when the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was passed. This act provided equal opportunity for employment within the federal government and in federally funded programs.

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Lakyn Nikole Dearnell

2013 District 5 First Place (\$1000)

The 2013 District 5 First Place Winner of \$1000 is Lakyn Nikole Dearnell, a graduate of Tolsia High School with Very High Honors. During high school, Laykn was a member of the Beta Club, National Honor Society, Art Club, yearbook staff, Student Council, and the competitive cheerleading team. I was an All-American Nominee and a Miss Rebel Nominee. She is currently an elementary education major and a member of Sigma Sigma Sigma at Marshall University.

Tolsia High School

Tolsia High School is strongly committed to providing a learning community that challenges ALL students to reach their greatest potential in academics, integrity, leadership, and responsible citizenship.

Tolsia High School, a consolidation of Crum High School and Fort Gay High School, opened its doors on January 18, 1988 in Glen Hayes, WV. The primary purpose of the Rebels focuses on student achievement and preparation toward successful futures.



Jacob Eastman

2013 District 5 Second Place (\$500)

The 2013 District 5 Second Place Winner of \$500 is Jacob Eastman, a 2014 graduate of Huntington High School.

Huntington High School

Huntington High School was established in 1996 with the consolidation of two schools rich in tradition, Huntington High School and Huntington East High School. The school carries the Highlander mascot with the colors old gold and hunter green. The Huntington High Staff consists of one head principal, one associate principal, four assistant principals, five counselors, 142 teachers, five secretaries, an athletic director, and 10 custodians. Eleven cooks staff the cafeteria and offer a variety of both hot and cold lunch selections daily. Four administrative offices can be found throughout the building to facilitate the needs of both students and staff. The award winning curricular and extra-curricular programs offered at Huntington High School provide activities for all areas of interest. Huntington High is accredited by the North Central Association.

Jacob Eastman

Huntington High School

Joni Eareckson Tada once said, "If you truly believe in the value of life, you care about all of the weakest and most vulnerable members of society." Throughout American history there have been many a movement for change in favor of those society views as lesser- the African American, the Woman, and the Native American are just several examples. However, no other group, no other movement, has ever wrought the amount of change in perspective that the disability rights movement was able to achieve. All other movements improved the condition of those being oppressed legally. That is it. The reason the disability rights movement is so powerful, the way it's changed the world, is that through the disability rights movement, the value of life changed for the better, not just for those with disabilities but for all.

Far prior to the disability rights movement, people with disabilities were looked down upon by every member of society, no matter what race, gender, or social class. Ancient Spartans killed those they considered "weak", and the Egyptians drowned them in the Nile as an atonement for some dark sin they had committed. Of course, the progression of time and the early American Culture was not much better. The upper class locked family members with disabilities away as if a dark secret. The lower class just threw them to the streets, drowned them in the rivers, or abandoned, left in the dark and cold. Priests and Preachers raised their voices and declared the disabled cursed by some malevolent deity, the children of the devil in fact. Society thought, "Even the black man and the woman have uses." The disabled? Not in their eyes.

Luckily, the passage of time and the improvement of medicine started to change that mindset. When doctors and psychologists started pointing to physical or mental ailments as the cause of various disabilities instead of some angry spirit, the disabled began being able to live quietly among the "normal", suffice they weren't an embarrassment or too much of a trouble. As the world progressed socially, the disabled man or woman's status also progressed, yet at a slower pace. The Black Man and the Woman gained their rights one by one, and each time the plight of the disabled individual was aided just a bit, but they were still seen as second class citizens.

Would businesses hire a man in a wheelchair when there was a "perfectly healthy" man beside him? No. Would the rights of the deaf woman be overlooked because she was seen as a nuisance and a burden? Yes. Buildings were made inaccessible

(see Eastman on p20)



Devena Smith

Washington High School

Approximately 50 million Americans living today with disabilities are people that lead independent, auspicious lives and refuse to let their disability be the solitary thing which defines them. These people prefer to be characterized by their ideas, accomplishments, dreams attitude. Inspiring people like this are the ones who set in motion the disability rights movement. The world has come a long way establishing equality among people, and the Disability Rights Movement has continued down this passage. The disability rights movement's activists fought an immense battle to win their rights.

Back in the 1800's, society treated people with disabilities very unfairly. If one were to have an infirmity, that person was forced to spend their life being tormented at circus, because that's the only thing common public thought disabled people were good for. During this time period, the disabled were placed under this awful stereotype which made it impossible for them to get a decent job. Even people who were qualified to do the work that was available, were discriminated against solely because of their disability. Individuals who attempted to find work were sent to be "entertainment" at circuses, where they were only tormented. If the handicapped weren't forced to spend their life in a circus, they were forced to enter an asylum and spend the remainder of their life there. This irrational behavior continued for decades; people with disabilities were marginalized up until World War I. After the war, veterans took a stand and asked that in reciprocity for sewing the country, the government should administer post-war rehabilitation services. Little government assistance began in the 1930's. Now that people were getting some aid, the Disability Rights Movement began to revolutionize. Even with this tiny amount of compensation, the disabled were denied access to public bathrooms, stores, telephones, and transportation. Discrimination in the workplace was still an issue as well. Disabled WWII vets from the 1940's and 1950's pushed governments farther to accommodate the veterans' needs for rehabilitation.

By the 1960's, the civil rights movement was also under way. Disability activists saw the opportunity to come together with other minorities to fight for their rights. Both the disabled and other minorities of this time faced the same restraints in society. Disability activists marched on Washington in the 1970's. Passed in 1973, the Rehabilitation Act mandated equal access to public transportation and housing services along with equal opportunity employment in federal government positions.

(see Smith on p20)



Devena Smith

2013 District 6 First Place (\$1000)

The 2013 District 6 First Place Winner of \$1000 is Devena Smith, a 2014 graduate of Washington High School.

Washington High School

By emphasizing individual strengths in a positive learning environment, Washington High School's staff members will help students to become proficient in 21st Century content, learning skills, and tools based on our core beliefs that enhance staff performance on behalf of all students. We believe....

1. in accountability at all levels.
2. parents and community members are respected partners in creating conditions for student success.
3. that hard work, motivation, and commitment are necessary for meaningful accomplishment.
4. that the school environment should be welcoming, safe, nurturing, and supportive.
5. that students are capable of achieving proficiency in 21st Century curriculum if given appropriate time and conditions.
6. in and respect the diverse and unique abilities of all students.
7. that all students deserve equal opportunities to learn.
8. that a quality education requires a deliberate and sustained effort to attract, develop, and retain high quality staff.



Daniel Benson

2013 District 6 Second Place (\$500)

The 2013 District 6 Second Place Winner of \$500 is Daniel Benson, a 2014 graduate of Washington High School.

Washington High School

By emphasizing individual strengths in a positive learning environment, Washington High School's staff members will help students to become proficient in 21st Century content, learning skills, and tools based on our core beliefs that enhance staff performance on behalf of all students. We believe....

1. in accountability at all levels.
2. parents and community members are respected partners in creating conditions for student success.
3. that hard work, motivation, and commitment are necessary for meaningful accomplishment.
4. that the school environment should be welcoming, safe, nurturing, and supportive.
5. that students are capable of achieving proficiency in 21st Century curriculum if given appropriate time and conditions.
6. in and respect the diverse and unique abilities of all students.
7. that all students deserve equal opportunities to learn.
8. that a quality education requires a deliberate and sustained effort to attract, develop, and retain high quality staff.

Daniel Benson

Washington High School

It was a fight to bring the normal, average people together to work and communicate with mental or physically disabled people as a nation. The Disability Rights movement changed how people from around the United States communicate with each other with numerous disabilities ranging from physical disabilities that are natural born, from incidents, or from age like, hearing problems, growth issues, body deformations, unable to speak, and blindness. And, mental problems like ADHD, ADD, Constant depression, and mood disorders to name a couple. This movement changed how these types of people who go day to day with these problems get around and shows that these types of people will not be stopped to get to where they need to go or to do the things they want to do. With our now expanded technology and medical discoveries, we have given more life back to the people who never asked for what they have and give them a life worth living for.

This movement created an act called the "Americans with Disabilities Act" which is an act to establish a prohibition of discrimination of disabled people. This would protect them from any hateful judgments or teasing from other people and the limitations of business or any access to public property. This act made the United States go into a full change up. Businesses would have to adjust or create perimeters of how people can be able to work properly without limitations. Also, the biggest work would be to have to change how any disabled people get around their daily commute like public transportation and other access. Today, we have examples that allow people to get around like handicap parking areas for cars to park in a zone where people can have more space to enter and exit his or hers vehicle, Metro stations have rigid floors to give blind disabled people an indication to where the path meets to the trains and also to give them wanting that they are near the edge of the pathway and close to going onto the rails, and instead of stairs or escalators, disabled people now are able to take machine operated transports up and down a particular facility's floors.

This act changed how the United States works as a whole and gives the fairness of well beings, equal opportunities, and the pure freedom that Americans are given to pursue a life of happiness even with their limitations.

But, we aren't the only ones who have changed for the better. Other countries had caught on with the changes in the world.



(Benson, cont. from p12)

Countries like the United Kingdom, France, Japan, and others have changed how disabled people get around and how they get to have their freedoms as any other individual has. It is a world changing matter and the United States and other countries are still aiming to make new improvements and ways for these people to move around in better ways and also how they can still have their ability to work and do the things they want to do. We have the power of making special medicines to possibly help the mentally ill people or tools to create prosthetic arms or legs, robotic body parts, and hearing aids to the physically disabled.

This all allows everyone to feel that they have the same equality as any other normal person does in the world. No longer should they feel like they are useless or not wanted by some in this world as some were in the past before this movement started and before the act was passed. Most things now in the world are built or fully created to help the disabled in anyway like watching TV, reading books, accessing the internet, driving, exercise and much more. The world tries to still make better ways to make any disabled person to feel much better with mental problems or physical problems and how they can still do the things they do but, with new upgrade to help give more of the feeling of being normal and having the freedom they deserve.

But, even with the greatness that we still work hard and try to give to the disabled, not everything started of the greatest. At the beginning where the United States and other countries started to go through this new changed of how disabled people are treated and how they have access, other people had a hard time taking it. It was mostly how it gave them access to items of need or ways to enter and use public services.

Business had a hard time to change because even with the great new act that allowed disabled people to be treated fairly and have the freedom to have access to needs, it was costly and a lot of small to big time businesses had to refuse to add and give more abilities to the disabled people like how they accessed machines or got around the work place and even safety for the people. With that, many businesses gave their governments

and congresses tons of opposition to not give the disabled people what they needed because it would be too painful when it came to money to give them the needs to help them to get around properly and to work as some said that: "it would be a disastrous impact on small and big businesses alike already struggling to survive" or business refused so they can just keep a good footing with their balances. Also, religious groups hated the act because it would once again be a costly thing to change for these types of people and since the church budgets are low, it gave them more anger to say no to the act as they would not be able to afford it as well. And, of course the other challenge was to completely stop the abuse from other people and mostly business owners who looked for people to hire as some would improperly refuse to hire disabled people as some thought they would do nothing but, be a hindrance and a waste of good money for the business and so already employment would be hardship for the disabled people.

Lawsuits would be the biggest financial part for the new act. Many did not agree with the changes that would have to be made with businesses and other means of accessibility for the disabled. As the act was signed in 1990 by the President, the act became a new in enforced act as of law so that meant that services and businesses would have to change their policies and would have to make adjustments to allow disabled people to have to ability to access services and work properly. But, many didn't change and many services and businesses looked away from the act's requirements. Though now, since it is law and it is illegal to not follow this act's requirements, many services and businesses now follow these requirements to allow disabled people to access services and allow them to work under their conditions as with the freedom as everyone else has. But, even now, some corporations and some services haven't changed yet.

For example, two major hotel room marketers with their business presence on the Internet were sued because they did not allow people with disabilities to book reservations for



(Benson, cont. from p13)

hotel rooms. Also, a major retail store was also sued because their website did not give people with low or no visibility to use the site properly. So, everyone who owns a service or business and even just works with them must meet the requirements of the act to give the people with disabilities the proper freedom to use what they need to as everyone else uses. And, of course everyone must now also abide by the rule not to discriminate any person with a disability at all or be punished by the law that enforces this act.

In the end, this movement change how people interact with one another and the ones with disabilities. The disabled have the proper freedom that every man and woman are entitled to but, are given special treatments and abilities to be taken care of and allow them to do what they want to do without the problem of other people discriminating their state of health or limitations from public services and financial benefits and even jobs which allows them to be able to work and make a profit for themselves.

It's a proper thing that these inflicted people have. These are disabilities that no one asked to be born with or wanted to be inflicted with from incidents or even from wars. These people just want to be treated fairly and be able to get around and do the things what they want to do. It shapes our world every day at what these people can do even with their disabilities. The Olympic Games have a special foundation and part of their games that allow people with physical disabilities to take part in the athletic games of the world but, with special alterations like track races that allows people with the lack legs to take part with special leggings that give them a footing type that they can run on while maintaining the speed of any other athlete. Many other organizations have also raised charities to help these victims and to help those inflicted to have a proper life.

We are still making new innovations on how we all can change for the better for everyone and many of the disabled. This act has changed the way we look at these people and has showed us that even with these problems they face, they still

have a life like everyone else and that we are just like them. ■

(Rundle, cont. from p2)

was attempting to teach others how to advocate for what they wanted , including myself, in an effort to make life a little better and a lot more independent for some. He taught me the same, so here I stand today expressing my feelings.

So, what is my continued impression of how the disability movement has shaped the world? I truly believe it started out with just a few that had big dreams, wishes, desires and that were tired of hearing "NO". Many individuals worked to build a foundation for others that also cared about the mission. The disability rights movement began in the 1960's encouraged by African Americans seeking equal civil rights and treatment as well as assistance from woman and the Women's Rights Movement. At this time, many individuals with different disabilities such as mental, physical, cognitive, visual and hearing impairments came together to fight for their cause. Much like the African American generation faced back in the 1960's when they decided to be silent no more.

The movement indicated that people with disabilities are indeed the experts of their needs. In 1968 the first federal disability rights legislation passed. The Architectural Barrier Act provided that all federally constructed buildings and facilities were accessible for individuals with physical disabilities. Another groundbreaking piece of legislation passed in 1973, the Rehabilitation Act. This was the first civil rights law requiring equal opportunity for people with disabilities. Primary this law prohibited any entity receiving federal funds to discriminate on the basis of disability. Other important laws during this time frame had a significant and positive impact on allowing individuals to gain employment, education and access to public buildings and services. The passing of the Education for Handicapped Children's Act helped provide access to education for children with disabilities. Before the passing of these initial laws, many people with disabilities



(Rundle, cont. from p14)

(Studivon, cont. from p3)

were treated as sub-human. Individuals felt incompetent and pitied. In my opinion, the entire fight to this day was to gain independence through accommodations. Just to have an avenue to live, work, play, etc, just like anyone else.

During this era of time, the largest federal or national protest (sit-in) related to the disability movement took place and section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was enacted. This demonstrated how grass roots advocacy can be effective. Section 504 expanded significantly the laws regarding discrimination based on disability. An important individual whom put massive time and effort into the movement was Edward Roberts.

In 1990, a dramatic event occurred following many years of civil rights advocacy. Although the advocacy efforts and the actions of thousands ultimately resulted in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Many called Justin Dart "the father of the ADA" and "the godfather of the disability rights movement" Justin Dart often stated that "the ADA was the civil rights act of the future". Indeed it was. I would encourage anyone reading this essay to take a few minutes and educate you about the foundation of these movements. The ADA enhanced the independence of all Americans with a disability. The law was comprehensive and addressed many needs including access to education, employment, public services and accessible entrances and parking.

The disability movement has made a major impact in my life and many Americans that have a disability. It has paved the way for future generations to excel with independence, provide accommodation instead of pity. To continue the growth of the movement, many fought as hard of a battle as those who fought our wars, thus leading to growth and freedom of our country.

Without the disability right movement thousands of individuals including myself would not have had the opportunity to live the lives we have today. The movement brought a sense of importance and respect, as well as independence and purpose to our lives. The movement has transformed our lives and our society. It is our time, my time to ensure the purpose continues. ■

Today, disability rights movement has given millions of humans the ability to live a semi-normal life. These people, who will have to live their entire lives with assistance, can feel somewhat independent. I must say, that feeling of independence, is probably the most relieving feeling in the world. Also, because of this movement, America is becoming a more open society, especially when it comes to mental and physical disabilities. However, there are still many situations where the disabled cannot feel comfortable; whether it is because they are getting started at, talked about, or even laughed at. Hopefully, with the help of more Disability acts, America can become more open and a better home for those living with any type of disability. ■

(Bergdorf, cont. from p4)

order to add regulations to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In 1978, the Atlantis Community of Colorado held a sit-in and blockade of the Denver Regional Transit Authority. The transit system was completely inaccessible for those with physical disabilities. The sit-in lasted a year, and ended when the company added buses with wheelchair lifts.

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act is the most significant piece of legislature in the disability rights movement. The act covered all of the bases that previous pieces of legislation had attempted to, as well as added the missing parts and protections that are necessary for the disabled. It mandates that all government programs be handicap accessible, employers make accommodations for disabled workers, equal opportunity is given in the workforce, transportation and communication be available, and that public venues make modifications to ensure handicap access.

Although it is not as widely known as the civil rights movement, the societal transition of the disability rights movement was just as great and the impact on the lives of those affected was outstanding. The controversy behind the disability rights movement was nowhere near as great as that of the other two influential movements in American history: no one thought about those who



(Bergdorf, cont. from p15)

couldn't speak, stand up, or fight for themselves. With the help of others, the movement was pushed through and the common goal of equality for all was achieved.

In modern times, most of us cannot picture a sidewalk without a ramp. We know to allow the handicapped onto the elevators, into their stall in the restroom, and, with envy, allot them spaces for parking. We no longer picture the mentally disabled as those who live in insane asylums or go to "special" schools. They are just as much part of normal society as those without any sort of handicap. We see the effects of the disability rights movement as we walk through the hallways at school every day. It has impacted us all, whether we realize it or not. Becoming disabled is not quite as threatening now that nearly everything is accessible. Knowing that you will be able to continue a mostly normal life is comforting when in an accident, and we have the disability rights movement to thank for that.

Stroll down the sidewalk. Order your McNuggets in McSign Language. Pick out your produce as you please. Society allows everyone to do so now. ■

(Mason, cont. from p5)

In 1974, my Uncle Jerry was on top of the world. He was attending a WV state college and was enjoying being the number two free-style wrestler in the country. Uncle Jerry enjoyed hunting, fishing, and working on his car. His goals were high. He wanted to study occupational safety and was positioning himself to begin his master's degree in that field.

Then tragedy struck. Uncle Jerry was involved in a horrible car accident. He and his close friend, who was driving, were on their way home late one evening. As they were rounding a sharp curve, the headlights of an oncoming car momentarily blinded Uncle Jerry's friend. Thinking the oncoming car was going to crash into them, his friend swerved sharply and when he did, Uncle Jerry's door was thrown open and he was flung

from the car. Several hours later he woke up in a hospital bed paralyzed from the waist down. He was destined to spend his life in a wheelchair.

There are 54 million Americans with disabilities. Some disabilities, like Down's syndrome, show up at birth while others, like muscular dystrophy, are progressive and show up later in life. Some are sporadic, like epilepsy, and others are both sporadic and progressive like multiple sclerosis. Some, like my Uncle Jerry's, are unexpected.

Some disabilities are hidden, like mental illness; while others are more visible like rheumatoid arthritis or the loss of a limb. Each disability comes in different levels of severity. For example, hearing loss can range from a mild loss to profound deafness, and while some people with autism spend their lives in institutions, others graduate from college, get married, and have children.

At one time, a physically and mentally challenged person was hidden away and never seen in public. These people were scrutinized and viewed as being different because of the way they looked, talked, & walked. Sadly they were often feared, teased, and ignored.

From the late 1860s until the 1970s, several American cities enacted "ugly laws" making it illegal for persons with "unsightly or disgusting" disabilities to appear in public. But all that changed in the mid-20th Century.

While the Civil Rights Movement was loudly taking place in the 1960s, the struggle for Disability Rights was quietly taking shape as well. Starting in 1968, a number of laws were created that established certain civil rights for persons with disabilities. These laws addressed architectural barriers, discrimination against persons with disabilities in federally funded programs, educational rights for children with disabilities, a "Bill of Rights" for persons with developmental disabilities and mental illness, discrimination in housing, consumer control over their own vocational rehabilitation plans, and the creation of Centers for Independent Living.

Finally, in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law. This is one of



(Mason, cont. from p16)

the most significant civil rights documents of the 20th Century. Its purpose was to end discrimination, reduce barriers to employment, and to safeguard access to education for people with disabilities.

Because of activists and the ADA, physical barriers have been overcome. At one time, people with disabilities had limited access to employment and were excluded in other aspects of daily life. But, today, laws have been written that require curb-cuts, ramps, and buses with lifts so that the disabled person now had the possibility of economic and social mobility.

Technology has also improved and has become critical for the person with a disability. Closed captioning television, TTY devices for telephones, voice-recognition systems, voice synthesizers, screen readers, and computers have dramatically changed the way we exchange information with people with disabilities.

Because of the disability rights movement, the person with a disability no longer has to live on the sidelines. Marilyn Hamilton, a paraplegic who wanted to participate in sports, invented a wheelchair that was light weight, fast, and easy to move. Because of her efforts and tenacity, people with disabilities can now participate in tennis, basketball, and races. The disability rights movement and the ADA have radically changed society's perception of persons with disabilities. Instead of being hidden away and stripped of their human dignity, people with disabilities are more visible now and their needs and rights are more carefully considered and they are now treated with the respect that is their due. Challenged persons speak for themselves, live independently, and make a true contribution to society.

At one time, my Uncle Jerry would have been hidden away. People would have regarded him with pity and some degree of disgust. He would have lived his life as a second class citizen, unable to speak for or take care of himself. However, because of the disability rights movement and to the ADA, my Uncle Jerry has a good job, drives his own van, owns his own house, and was able

to complete his master's degree in occupational safety. He still enjoys hunting and fishing and is a productive member of society. But above all else, he is my hero. ■

(Sands, cont. from p6)

The third impact is the development of community programs for physically and mentally disabled individuals. Approximately 40 years ago, if an individual was mentally impaired they were institutionalized with others who were mentally impaired. Now in America, they are able to live in their community and interact with others. This has greatly shaped our perception of individuals with disabilities. We currently see them out in the community as regular citizens, shopping, eating out and interacting with others.

The Disabilities Movement is a win-win situation for everyone; society benefits as well as those with disabilities. Without the movement our society would not have some of its advances in technology or medicine. Our increase in awareness has pushed us to create new innovations to make individuals more independent and healthy. Technology continues to develop, leading to more innovations. For example, prior to the 1800's, those with blindness were secluded from others. Not until the early 1800's did those with blindness start attending school, followed by the advances in technology such as Braille helped changed the world of these individuals. Now-days more technology is enabling those with blindness to do more and more. Modern technology has provided countless surgeries and life improvements to those with physical disabilities. Whether it is a motorized wheelchair, bionic limb, advances in pharmacology or a cochlear implant, technology has shaped our world.

The Disability Rights Movement has improved our great nation; it has changed our environment, shaped our education, focused our technology, and even Socialized our citizens. We truly want equality for all, regardless of physical or



(Sands, cont. from p17)

mental disability. It is not a perfect society without discrimination, but our world has greatly improved and continues to grow in the right direction. ■

(Cook, cont. from p7)

Rather than being ostracized and placed in an institutional setting, his public school inclusion classes built his self-worth. Because of the continuing progression of equal rights legislation in the Disabilities Rights Movement, adaptive technologies, accommodations to his physical environment, and positive changes in people's attitudes afforded my Cousin the pleasure of being accepted and welcomed as a Trainer on the high school football team. Before his graduation focused meetings were held so my Cousin and his parents would be linked to vocational training programs, assisted living housing and funded transportation providers. The Movement has enabled a lifetime of equal opportunities where all persons of disabilities, like my Cousin, can be active and productive participants in their communities.

My cousin may not have the same choices I have for the future, but he has the most important things of all — a family who loves and supports him and advocates in the Disabilities Rights Movement who will continue to support his equal rights as a young man of special abilities who contributes in a meaningful way to his community and the greater society at large.

So you can see, the Disability Rights Movement literally shaped, in different ways, the lives of two family members dear to me. Their experiences have impacted me in a way that others may not be blessed to know. My Uncle and Cousin helped me grow a heart of compassion for people of all abilities. The enduring legacy of the Disability Rights Movement is that it has touched people like my Uncle, my Cousin, and me. I am dedicated to the rights of the disabled and I am grateful to the advocates of the Disabilities Rights Movement who have removed the stigma from "disability" and resurrected it into hope-filled, choice-filled equal rights and opportunities. ■

(Acree, cont. from p8)

Following the end of World War I, disabled veterans expected the government to provide compensation for their service. In 1935, Franklin Roosevelt reciprocated by signing the Social Security Act, assuring assistance to disabled adults in America. While these were great strides toward equality, there was still much work needed to be done.

In the 1940's and 1950's the United States found itself in another war, once again causing many, many injuries resulting in disabilities. These disabled veterans put even more pressure on the government to provide compensation. Their cry was heard by several individuals who began working and researching solutions. In 1948, Dr. Howard A. Rusk founded the Rusk Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine where veterans were treated for the physical and psychological effects of the war. In the 1950's the barrier-free movement began with the help of the Veteran's Administration, The President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped and the National Easter Seals Society. These organizations worked to promote handicapped accessible buildings and offices. As the need for compensation for handicapped individuals increased, awareness of this growing issue also increased. While significant progress was being made, some in society still refused to accept the physically and mentally handicapped as human beings who had rights. In 1953, Clemens Benda, a clinical director of Fernald School in Waltham, Massachusetts performed radioactive experiments on mentally retarded boys without their parents' consent. Despite those individuals who treated disabled persons as if they were not even human. There were the few that never gave up the fight for equal opportunity.

In the 1960's, the civil rights movement emerged which enabled a collaborative effort between those who were disabled and others who felt they were being denied their basic rights. Together they embarked on the journey to equality. In 1961, the American Standards Association published the first accessibility standard, requiring that all buildings be made



(Acree, cont. from p18)

accessible to people with disabilities. This was a huge achievement which paved the way for many more breakthroughs. In 1964, the Civil Rights Act is passed, terminating discrimination against African Americans and women in the work place. The act, however, did nothing for the discrimination against disabled persons and did not ensure them the rights to employment in any business. These disappointments did not prevent handicapped individuals and their loved ones from continuing the fight. As time continued, people began to see the disabled with a new perspective. In 1968, the first Special Olympics and the already established Paralympics began to gain popularity. People with disabilities had the opportunity to show their skills and the world watched in amazement at these resilient human beings.

In 1973, the Rehabilitation Act made it illegal for any business to receive federal funding to discriminate due to a disability. Disabled individuals had finally obtained equality in their workplace and were able to feel useful and become a part of society. In 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was passed ensuring that disabled children could go to public schools like all other children. In the 1980's disability activists began to lobby for a piece of legislation like the Civil Rights Act for disabled Americans. In 1990, their efforts paid off when the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed ensuring equality for all handicapped Americans in every aspect of their lives.

Society has come a long way on their views of disabled persons. Society now sees the remarkable individuals who: despite their disability have made great accomplishments. Individuals such as Helen Keller, Frida Kahlo, Franklin Roosevelt, Stephen Hawking, Nick Vujicic, and Bethany Hamilton, who inspire us with their amazing stories and astound us with their accomplishments in music, sports, science, art, politics and so much more. These individuals teach us that there are no limits and to never give up on our dreams, but to those who still say that disabled individuals are not normal, you are right. They are phenomenal! ■

(Dearnell, cont. from p9)

sterilized, and killed due to ignorance and fear of difference. Extremists, such as Hitler, believed that if we kept people with disabilities locked away, prevented them from reproducing or even killed them then we would have a more perfect society.

After World War II, this outlook quickly began to change. Veterans of World War II were bringing attention to the issue by demanding rehabilitation training. Most Americans supported the heroic veterans, because they were appreciative of their sacrifice for our country.

Access to education was a serious issue for children with disabilities up until the 1970s. They were not permitted to attend regular public school classes like other children. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was passed, which provided children with disabilities access to public school. This act was later renamed and expanded to allow disabled students to be included in regular classes unless their disability kept them from doing so.

Employment was also a concern for disabled citizens. They were discriminated against by employers and often were denied work because of their disabilities. This began to change when the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was passed. This act provided equal opportunity for employment within the federal government and in federally funded programs.

The disability rights movement has shaped our world by opening ignorant eyes up to new ideas. It has showed us that people who are disabled are not sideshows or science experiments. They are human just like everyone else and are capable of functioning in normal society by attending public school and joining the work force.

As the world spins, we continue to mold our laws and beliefs. The first step we take in change isn't always the best, but we continue to sculpt until we get the outcome we desire. The disability rights movement will continue to spin and we will continue with our masterpiece until it is perfected.

The disability rights movement has shaped our world by opening ignorant eyes up to new



(Dearnell, cont. from p19)

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As the world spins, we continue to mold our laws and beliefs. The first step we take in change isn't always the best, but we continue to sculpt until we get the outcome we desire. The disability rights movement will continue to spin and we will continue with our masterpiece until it is perfected. ■

(Eastman, cont. from p10)

to those who could not walk their stairs, schools made no differentiation between the needs of a disabled student, whether mental or physical, and the needs of the rest of the class. The argument of the day? Why burden the majority with the needs of a few, or even a single person? A person who, in fact, is not even fit for everyday life?

The disabled were seen, even after thousands of years of advancements, as sub-par.

Everything changed after the disability rights movement.

The voices of those society deemed as lesser combined to make something more powerful, more full, and more alive than any call before. Within several years, ramps, elevators, curb cuts, lifts, and even special bathrooms were added to public facilities. Laws were passed requiring jobs to hire those determined to be disabled, allowing the "sub-par" to finally excel.

Yet, all of these changes could have accounted for nothing in the long run if the only change wrought was legal change. The power, the success, the world changing effect the disability rights movement had was that change was present not just on a legal level, but on a social level as well.

The very value of life had increased.

Prior to that, one would look to the person society deemed as "imperfect" with disgust, and just a bit of anger. What value is this person if this person can't live up to my expectation of "person"? The beauty of the disability rights movement is

that the very definition of "person" was changed. A "person" was no longer someone who was on the same physical or mental health as the rest of society, a person was, in fact, a person. Everyone. Every individual, walking or wheeling. Therefore, since every man and woman is a person, they have the right to equally pursue life to the fullest.

Thanks to this movement, the mindset of "every person is of equal value" has spilled over and has begun to effect other social areas involving those of other races and sexes and even sexual preferences. If you can see a person who is the same but physically unequal as equal, not in body which grows old and withers and dies, but in spirit, than how powerful can you see someone completely different than you in every way as being of equal value?

When this happened, did the value of life decrease to the level of the disabled? Of course not. In fact, it increased to the level of society's highest elites, putting everyone on the same playing field in life's value. Value is now placed not in strength or mental capabilities or in any measurable quantities, but resides in the reality that lie is life, and life is precious!

Legal change happens every day. Laws are passed all the time because someone different filed a complaint about the things they are running, and though that law might change the way people are forced to behave, no law can truly change the way people value life itself. It is in this corner that the disabilities right movement differs and is world changing. Thanks to it, the value of an individual is weighed not by the strength of his legs, the stability of her mind, or by the ability of her eyes. Rather, it is weighed by the simple fact that every person is a person, and a person nothing less than the most valuable treasure this world has to offer. ■

(Smith, cont. from p11)

In the 1980's, activists lobbied for one ordinance that would ensure all their rights at one time. These determined advocates campaigned for decades. In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passed which would soon serve



(Smith, cont. from p20)

Americans with disabilities some general justice. Soon the disabled would have access to equal opportunity employment along with equal access to necessary accommodations. The ADA attempted to eliminate discrimination against the handicapped as well, but wasn't immediately effective. It was hard to just erase all the previous thoughts and opinions from all the people who built up assumptions about people with disabilities. Prejudice and stereotypical biases are still things the disabled have to deal with today, but as a whole, the world has made great progress in accommodating the lives of the disabled.

Currently, all buildings that the public have access to are required to have accommodations that comply with the needs of disabled people. The ADA in 1990 listed regulations for all existing facilities. As the world grew, it recognized that standards for places of business needed to be revised. In order to adhere to the new required adjustments, The Justice Department proposed standards that are to be followed by all newly constructed buildings. This is one of the many changes that molded the world to be accessible for the disabled. Changes that are beneficial to disabled people now occur in great varieties.

Education, transportation, and the work field are now things that the disabled can look forward to instead of avoid for fear of discrimination. Education has definitely come a long way with the Disability Rights Movement. At first, children with disabilities were denied an education altogether. Then, they had an opportunity for education but it was limited to being segregated from mainstream classrooms. This helped somewhat, but this umbrella of disabled students included all students with disabilities; so children who were able to participate in mainstream classes, were lacking a more appropriate education due to the segregation. Now classrooms aren't allowed to isolate students from mainstream environments, heightening the opportunity for children with disabilities to achieve a higher education.

Transportation has evolved quite a lot over the past decade. Para-transit services are flexible services with wheelchair—accessible vans that

can accommodate the disabled.

Para-transits offer door-to—door servicing, which can be helpful in many ways for handicapped individuals. Over-the-road buses complied with the laws of ADA in 2007 and are now accessible to people with disabilities. Amtrak is becoming more popular and also more accessible for the handicapped. Ninety four percent of Amtrak passengers board at accessible stations. In 2009, the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) of 1986 was amended to ensure that disabled passengers would be able to use aircraft services. This Act included the use of foreign carriers, which made international flights an ease for the disabled. Parking lots everywhere have reserved spaces located near the entrance of businesses to ensure the disabled have adequate accommodations.

Veterans from our world wars who fought for rehabilitation would be ecstatic about how far the nation has come with benefits for veterans. The VA presents benefits for Disability, Education, Training, Vocational Rehabilitation, Employment, Home Loan Guaranty, Dependent Survivor Benefits, Medical Treatment, Life insurance, and Burial Benefits. All the work from the 40's and 50's veterans has recently paid off.

In conclusion, our world has been shaped by the diligence of the Disability Rights Movement activists. Children are now given equal opportunity to get an education. Parents have the option of creating specific learning plans called IEP's to better their child's education. Transportation was once a huge struggle for the disabled, but as technology becomes more advanced, traveling is more accessible for the handicapped. Veterans are now recognized and appreciated for their service to our country. Vets also receive an immense amount of benefits. Our new world is a direct result of the decades of campaigning and great efforts of the Disability Rights advocates. The world took a new shape of an equal opportunity, accessible place for the disabled instead of a close—minded discriminating prison. ■

WVSILC
P.O. Box 625
Institute, WV 25112-0625

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