In this issue...

Inclusion NEWS

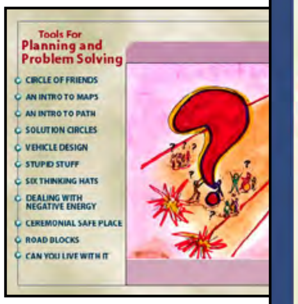
Marsha Forest Centre: Inclusion.Family.Community

A Publication of Inclusion Press International

All Means All: No Buts!

Visit our Web Page: http://inclusion.com

Tools for Change:
These Screens come from the CD - designed to help you strengthen your work.



INCLUSION/EXCLUSION

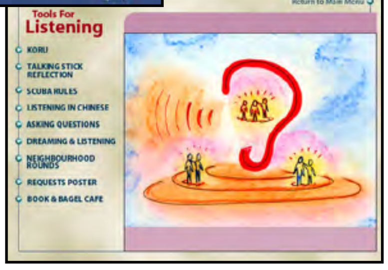
Overview:
People often ask us, "What is inclusion?"

It is a good question. It gets to the heart of the matter.

Because inclusion is at the heart of all our work and these tools, it is important to have a definition and an understanding of inclusion.

Purpose:
To enable participants to better understand inclusion and exclusion and to see how it applies to any aspect of life.

1 of 5



Changing Times

Marsha's instructions were to continue. This issue of Inclusion News signals that the work goes on. Full lives are still a distant dream for too many thousands. Articles from around the world convey hope, determination and momentum as we all move toward full inclusion. No one said it would be easy. It isn't. But the choices are to shrivel into couch potato oblivion or to get out and organize for the next phase of this work. We say organize. Don't do it alone. Listen to the children. Think of the future possibilites and then do the hard slogging.

Inclusion Press and the Centre hope that this issue of Inclusion News, our new revised web page, our new ezine (sign up on the web page), and our new CD-ROM will strengthen you for the work ahead. New books are in the works. We are expanding our training network and have just created new courses to keep all of us current, connected and competent. There is work to do; lives to be lived; a future to be built. We look forward to working with you to build these dreams.

Jack Pearpoint & Cathy Hollands - Inclusion Press, Inclusion Network and the Marsha Forest Centre.

NEW Training Events:

Change is a Challenge for all of us.
We have had to rethink, refocus and reorganize to continue moving forward.

- TOOLS for CHANGE for Trainers (one day)
- TOOLS for CHANGE for Change Agents (2 day)
- GRAPHICS Academy for Inclusion (1 day)
- Person Centered Planning with MAPS and PATH (2 days)

Spring Institute on Inclusion
Portland, OR
April 6-12, 2002 - http://inclusion.com or
call Flory Ericksen: 503-838-2403

The Circles Gathering
(July 26-28, in Manchester, CT)

Celebrating the Ordinary - 3 days - {tba}

The Inclusion Network
We are creating a talented team of associates to expand our training capacity for you.
Inclusion Network Gathering - time/place tba
Watch **www.inclusion.com** as we list new associates.

We have locations and dates for some courses. Others are available for booking. **Contact Cathy Hollands, Jack Pearpoint or John O'Brien**. Watch the web page for updates & course information.

If you want to put a **PATH in Action** (title of our video), or become a more **Creative Facilitator**, give us a call. We created the materials and the courses. We can come to you!

Call Cathy: 416-658-5363, fax: 416-658-5067
E-Mail: cathy@inclusion.com
Web: www.inclusion.com

COMMUNITY

MAPS

PATH

PATH

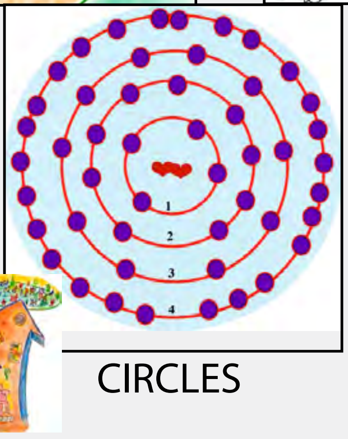
PATH

PATH IN ACTION

GRAPHICS

TOOLS FOR CHANGE

CIRCLES

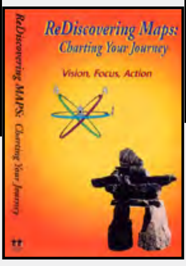


CIRCLES

KIDS & FAMILITES

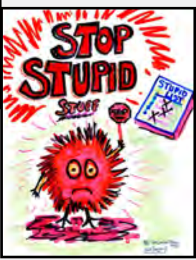
REDISCOVERING MAPS

MAPS



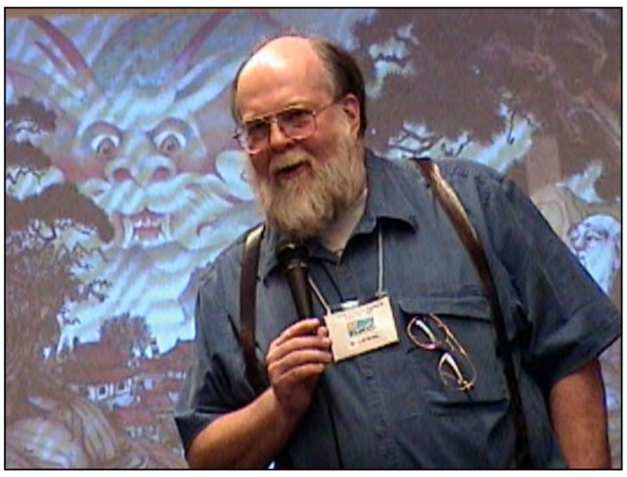
SOLUTION CIRCLES

LISTENING



STUPID STUFF

Inclusion Press, INCLUSION NETWORK bring you CIRCLES, MAPS, PATH, Graphics - TOOLS FOR CHANGE



Great Questions and The Art of Portraiture

John O'Brien

Among my friend Judith Snow's wise sayings is her definition of a great question. "A great question refuses to be answered, and so it leads us into deeper thinking and deeper connections." Visual play with the word shows that questions contain quests. Great questions move people into the adventure of searching together for something compellingly worthwhile. Such a search can seem too much to manage while juggling the daily requirements of survival or it can threaten too much embarrassment from the risk of seeming a poor imitator of Don Quixote. So, paradoxically, we can easily ignore great questions by refusing time for deeper thinking or withholding energy from deeper relationships. To influence us, great questions need hosts to invite their presence into busy lives and champions to remember their merit in the face of anxiety.

The hosts and champions of great questions need courage, respect, and a discipline. While great questions can be found in any field, what interests me here is the framing of great questions in the lives of people whose capacities easily get lost. Person-centered planning offers a disciplined way to search for great questions in the lives of particular people who choose it, questions that lead to deeper thinking about a person's identity and contributions and to deeper connections to other people who matter for the person's future. According to the last issue of Inclusion News, Sarah, nine-year old John's mother, has found such a question:

> *"Who will need to know John, and what kind of experience will they need to have with each other so that someone in our circle will offer John employment when he leaves school? What do we need to be doing together over the next ten years for this to happen?'*

This is a great question because it anticipates a co-evolution of resourcefulness over the next decade. John's identity and gifts will develop as those now close to him assist him to know and be known by a wider circle of people. The community John lives in will develop by appreciating his contributions and adapting to make room for him.

Reflection on Sarah's great question suggests a framing question for the person centered planning process. This framing question asks...

> *"Under what conditions can this person discover and express more of who she or he is as a known and valued contributor to our community?"*

The answer to this framing question will be another question, a great question like Sarah's if its askers work artfully.

Great questions have their source in an imaginative and respectful understanding of a person's life. The service world that surrounds many people with developmental disabilities seems less comfortable with the image of understanding people as an art than with the image of an objective science of assessment and intervention. Such an image of science appeals, in part, because it promises the sort of steady improvement in the prediction and control of people's behavior that makes service systems more manageable. From this point of view, one gets to know a person in order to discipline need. Talk of art, imagination and great questions can sound like the trumpets of anarchy.

Those experienced in person -centered planning resist arguments for impersonal assessment as the basis of assistance for people with disabilities. A careful confidence grows from living through important changes with people who have hold of a great question about their lives in community. This confidence supports twin judgements on the sort of professionalism that serves managerial command and control in the name of objective science. Such science is dangerous insofar as its predictions trap people in professionally controlled low expectations and segregation. And, such science tells uninteresting stories by abstracting life as particular people experience it into sterile categories and roles. Objective knowledge may suffice for those medical treatments that function impersonally (though some physicians would disagree); only art will do for finding and pursuing a great question.

Confidence in the rightness of assisting people to discover and pursue great questions gives practitioners of person centered planning the courage necessary to do their work. It also exposes them to danger. Bad art is at least as common as bad science and the consequences of artistic misunderstanding can be as life-wasting or trivial as the consequences of scientific assessment too often are.

At least three kinds of relationships reduce the risk of poor understanding:

1) maintaining alliance with the people, families, and circles one plans with and making time to reflect on what aids and what hinders their journey;

2) joining with other practitioners for mutual support and coaching; and

3) linking with complementary disciplines to gain a broader perspective on the work.

Links to complementary disciplines can help by suggesting different metaphors for the work, different practices, and different ethical perspectives. A brief introduction to the talented originator of a complementary discipline follows in the hope that it will persuade practitioners of person-centered planning to meet her by reading three fine books. (The books, in the order I would suggest reading them, are:

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1999). *Respect: An exploration.* Reading, MA: Perseus Books. Here she applies her approach to the investigation of a virtue that is fundamental to the work of person-centered planning.

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffmann Davis (1997). The art *and science of portraiture.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. This describes her method in relationship to visual art and to social sciences.

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994). *I've known rivers: Lives of loss and liberation.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. Here are wonderful portraits of successful African-Americans told to disclose the kinds of experiences and relationships important for liberation.)

In her practice of research as portraiture, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, a sociologist at Harvard's Graduate School of Education, offers valuable resources to those who want to host the emergence of great questions in people's lives. She thinks of herself as weaving a tapestry from the elements her subjects share with her and describes her project in words that will resonate and raise helpful questions among practitioners of person-centered planning.

> *Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions - their authority, knowledge and wisdom. The drawing of the portrait is placed in social and cultural context and shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject... (The art and science of portraiture, p. xv.*)

She defines her work as a counterpoint to a social science concerned primarily with defining social problems for an elite audience.

> *Portraiture... seeks to illuminate the complex dimensions of goodness and is designed to capture the attention of a broad and eclectic audience. (The art and science of portraiture, p. xvi.*)

In Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's hands, the idea of portraiture is fruitful in many ways, Each of her books repays study in now techniques for exploring and presenting lives, in new ideas about the contributions of professionals and researchers, and in civic lessons drawn from people's living wisdom. Here, I will focus on some of the contributions her work makes to my thinking about an important ethical question: what is the proper relationship between the practitioner of person-centered planning and the people she wants to serve?

For some practitioners this question has a straightforward answer. They see themselves as reflecting only what people say they want and assisting people to organize available resources to get it. The practitioner meets requirements by performing a two or three step sequence:

1) record the words people say in answer to straightforward questions about their desires and dreams;

2) facilitate the writing of an action plan for making it happen - and, sometimes,

3) gather people occasionally to check and revise the action plan.

This answer makes sense as far as it goes.. Many people do have clear and achievable ideas about what would significantly improve their lives, ideas that have gone unrealized because they have remained buried under other people's unwillingness to listen to them and act on what they hear. But reflection on Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's account of the roles she plays with the people who choose to join her in understanding what their lived knowledge and wisdom can contribute to a stronger community shows that this kind of relationship only makes a good beginning. Much more is possible when people consent to share part of their lives with someone who seeks to know them in order to serve both them and their community. As you read the following paragraph, notice the seven roles and associated activities she describes herself as playing in unfolding her subject's lives. Then take a moment to consider the possibilities and dangers each role might hold for the practitioner of person-centered planning.

> *As I listen to these extraordinary women and men tell their life stories, I play many roles. I am a mirror that reflects back their pain, their fears, and their victories. I am also the inquirer who asks the sometimes difficult questions, who searches for evidence and patterns. I am, the companion on the journey, bringing my own story to the encounter, making possible an interpretive collaboration. I am the audience who listens, laughs, weeps, and applauds. I am the spider woman spinning their tales. Occasionally, I am a therapist who offers catharsis, support, and challenge, and who keeps track of emotional minefields. Most absorbing to me is the role of the human archaeologist who uncovers the layers of mask and inhibition in search of a more authentic representation of life experience. (I've known rivers, p. 26)*

Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's way of understanding portraiture illuminates another problem with the notion of the practitioner as simply taking accurate dictation. Portraiture works from the powerful effects of the artist on the portrait, even on a photographic portrait, and does not try to hide behind a screen of objectivity. Such a screen can be made from the fabric of positivistic science and professionalism; it can also be made from the naive idea that "I only do what the person tells me! Even mirrors lack objectivity,

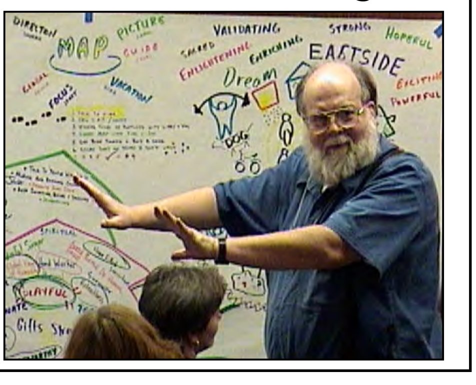
> *... through [the arts of] documentation, interpretation, analysis, and narrative we raise the mirror, hoping -with accuracy and discipline- to capture the mystery and artistry that turn image into essence. (The art and science of portraiture, p. xvii.*)

The possibility- of understanding oneself as human archeologist, spider woman, companion, inquirer, and portraitist while doing the work of person-centered planning raises difficult questions about the nature of the agreement between the practitioner and the person she assists. Is the relationship solely to benefit the person, or might it be understood more powerfully as a relationship that exists to benefit both the person and a community that acts unthinkingly against itself by excluding the person and denying the person's contributions? Perhaps person-centered planning could serve the common good by supporting people to represent and deepen their knowledge, wisdom, vision, and authority. And perhaps the subjects of person-centered planning, like Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's subjects, better disclose their knowledge, wisdom, vision, and authority through *engaged* conversation with someone they authorize to actively inquire with them and produce a portrait of them. The imbalance of power between the practitioner and the person she assists trouble these questions in ways that raise even more difficulty than they do in the dialogue between Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and her subjects.

A practitioner of person-centered planning who wanted to add the skills and roles of the portraitist to her repertoire would need to build relationships with people and their families and allies based on commitment to a common project that early trials of those skills and roles could serve. She *would* also seek connections *to others* interested in going deeper in their work by trying new ways of engagement and new kinds of representations of people. In this way, study of Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot's work might be the occasion for another great question entering her life.

John O'Brien E-mail: RSA315@cs.com

This essay also appeared in *Realizations,* 2001. For information call 519.433.2387 or E-mail susannahjoyce @sprint.ca



Marsha passed on June 2, 2000 after a 12 year battle with cancer. This picture is from the Tools for Change CD-ROM, a video clip showing Marsha in full flight. Visit the Centre's web site for an extensive photo collection.

MARSHA FOREST CENTRE

Inclusion.Family.Community

All things change with time and need. For the Centre for Integrated Education and Community the time arrived with the passing of one of our founders, Marsha Forest, internationally known and loved originator, creator, instigator. The need was the need to honour and remember Marsha's passing in a way, which would be meaningful to her and to her, many friends around the world. The newly renamed MARSHA FOREST CENTRE is dedicated to carrying on the work begun by Marsha in ways of which Marsha would approve.

After a number of thinking and planning meetings the Centre's board has defined the outline of a new and yet old mandate. The new is to be proactive as a Centre in initiating and supporting activities which have not been central previously. We shall support directly people and organizations trying to advance inclusion in education and community, but doing so on a shoestring. We shall initiate research projects to be conducted under the Centre's aegis or in collaboration with others. We shall initiate community development projects with our old friends and our new friends. Together we are better!

The old will be to continue with the developmental and creative adventures which have characterized the Centre since its founding. We shall speak out on issues of segregation and discrimination. We shall go to people who need support. We shall write from our hearts and continue Inclusion News. We shall work across national boundaries. We shall respect and support the efforts of others to make the world more inclusive in every way.

The MARSHA FOREST CENTRE invites you to visit our web page at http://www.inclusion.com. We also invite you to support us financially and spiritually so that we can continue to work together to change the world around us.

Gary Bunch, Chair, Board of Directors

We struggle, we grow weary, we grow tired. We are exhausted, we are distressed, we despair. We give up, we fall down, we let go. We cry. We are empty, we grow calm, we are ready. We wait quietly.

A small, shy truth arrives. Arrives from without and within. Arrives and is born. Simple, steady, clear. Like a mirror, like a bell, like aflame. Like rain in Summer. A precious truth arrives and is born within us. Within our emptiness.

We accept it, we observe it, we absorb it. We surrender to our bare truth. We are nourished, we are changed, we are blessed. We rise up. For this we give thanks.

Michael Leunig

The **Centre** is renamed and working. **Inclusion Press** is in production mode. **Inclusion News** is out. The new **web page** is up. The new Ezine is ready. The **Tools for Change CD** is out. **New courses** have been designed and are booking now. **The Inclusion Network** is being created to expand our training and network support. Join us as we create the future we want - like Marsha wanted.

Darkness cannot put out darkness,
Only light can do that...

Difficult and painful as it is, we must walk on in the days ahead with an audacious faith in the future.

When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We miss **Gunnar Dybwad** too. But Gunnar was not a quitter for even a moment. He and Rosemary led all of us to believe in families, to support families, to build for the future. And with eight decades of personal perspective, Gunnar could tell us all that things change - and can change for the better. Look to our history if you have any doubts. We can make a future for our children. Lets get to work.

Marsha Forest as Creator

7 October 2000

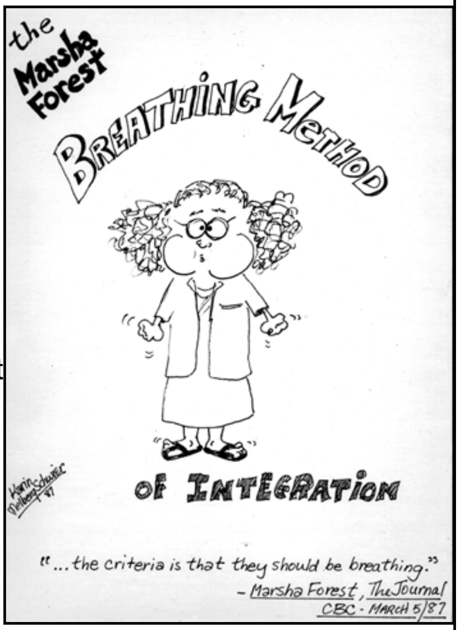
John O'Brien

In order to finish the last thing that my friend Marsha and I will write together, I have been watching videos of her at work with small groups of people. Watching, I have thought about the guidance that the Creator Spirit gives us through Marsha's way of working. In Marsha's work, the Creator Spirit tends to imperatives. (I ask her forgiveness for omitting the underscores and exclamation points.)

Believe that our deepest dreams matter. Refuse and confront the manufactured images that enthrall our minds to the service of an economy committed to rapidly converting the beauty of our planet into profits and waste. Create visions that hold our hope for justice.

Realize that dreams of justice honored connect us in a common search for belonging, for socially significant work, for wonder at the polyphonic harmonies of our beautifully diverse world, for deep appreciation of one another's gifts.

Realize in particular that the dreams of excluded and silenced people have social significance. Often exclusion arises from an anxious concern that if "they" are included, "we" will somehow loose. Transform that concern into a search for ways to receive one another's gifts. Listening to, honoring and enrolling in the dreams of excluded and silenced people opens the most respectful path to the beloved community.



Search for proper names and be exuberant in their application. Share in the spirit of Eve and Adam naming the creatures of the garden. "Let's call it...INCLUSION... MAPS... PATH." "Let's tell people what is NOT INCLUSION ... NOT MAPS ... NOT PATH"

Design events that actualize the belief that "All means all". Invite unexpected people. Demonstrate that inclusion is not the drudgery of compliance with regulations but the hard work of finding strength in facing and learning from real differences.

Speak out passionately against the social delusions and material conditions that bury our gifts and.

Challenge people to act in small everyday ways to build a community in which all are welcome, each belongs, and everyone collaborates to make the whole community work for justice.

Create delightful and de-stabilizing moments in which the voices of those excluded must be heard...

... moments in which adults learn from children
... moments in which professionals encounter the human stories of parents
... moments in which professors find their understanding transformed by people with little use for abstractions

Live out the proclamation that "Together we are better". Find people who are strong where you are weak and partner with them. Choose companions to share confusion, disappointment, suffering and death and figure out how to hold them close enough to matter.

Dare to apply glitter shamelessly and acquire instructional materials in the toy department.

Welcome people with respect and hospitality. Welcome people AND make them uncomfortable by insisting on welcoming their dreams. Generate un-ease by taking people's responsibility to their gifts with ferocious seriousness.

Insist that we honor ourselves and the world we share by...

... giving clear voice and vivid graphic expresion to our visions
... judging our current reality in terms of our highest values
... enrolling others in shared action to materialize our dreams and realize our gifts
... respecting our need to keep ourselves strong and make ourselves smarter and more skillful
... taking definite, courageous steps

Appropriate shamelessly. Take up the slogans and theories and techniques that serve mindless consumerism and twist them inside out to make tools for people's education and action, (Marsha was even willing to appropriate and distribute questionably edible insults to the noble concept of the chocolate chip cookie.)

Get help to recognize the anxieties and compulsions that turn up time and again to separate, isolate, deplete, and discourage us. Welcome and give shape to nameless disease and timidity, transmuting them into addressable fears and barriers worthy of a creative fight.

Learn and teach from your experience. Find the lessons for self and others in victories, defeats, joys and pains. Tell others fearlessly.

Nurture the creative darkness of the inner-life. Marsha and Jack's travel adventures, Marsha's wide reading, and the music and drama she loved fed thousands of steno pad pages of reflections that energized and enriched her teaching, her poetry, and her writing.

See the work as set on a big stage. One of Marsha's favorite rhetorical figures is, "It's about..." Holding a whole school responsible for overcoming exclusion is about social justice. Helping a person marginalized by illiteracy to harness the power to read to their aspirations is about social justice. Gathering a circle of people to support someone in pursuit of their dream is about social justice.

Micah (left), Scott (seated), and fellow adventurers

Scott has a Good Mind and a Good Smile

Micah Fialka

Hi! I am Micah. I am writing about a guy met at the Toronto Summer Institute 2001. His name is Scott and he is 18 years old. He is a cool kid. He doesn't have eyes but he has three nice helpers. I like him. He is a new friend and a new pal. In Toronto, I went swimming with him. He lets us know when he wants to go swimming by moving his legs. I went to his PATH because I wanted to know more stories about Scott. It was interesting.

It was fun meeting Scott at the Institute because he was close to my age. Different people have different abilities. Scott helped me understand that.

On the last day of the Institute, Scott's mom met my mom and they both cried like mom's cry. They were happy. Scott's mom told my mom that the Institute felt like a Bar Mitzvah for Scott. I liked hearing that because I had a great Bar Mitzvah when I turned 13 years old.

About two weeks after I met Scott, my family and I went to Israel. I found a cool Prayer Shawl for Scott. Prayer shawls are important because Jews wear them when they pray. Marsha Forest liked wearing her father's prayer shawl.

When I came back to Michigan, my Great Aunt Joanne and Uncle Ross drove me to Canada to Scott's house. He lives about 3 hours from my home. It was fun to give Scott the prayer shawl that I bought in Israel. He was happy.

Scott and I went to the African Safari where the animals jumped on a car. We went out to dinner and I got to sleep over.

The next day I took the train home from Scott's house all the way to Windsor, ALL BY MYSELF. I felt happy that I could take the train. I had fun with my new pal, Scott. He taught me that friends can help you through good times and hard times. He taught me that it was easy to take the train by myself because he gave me strength. Scott is a nice friend and I'll be seeing him again. I hope I can see him at the Summer Institute in 2002.

And then I got an update...(editor)

Micah's E-mail: micahff@aol.com

Scott (seated) and Micah (3rd from left) at Toronto Summer Institute 2001.

Dear Jack,

Micah loves his story about Scott. Due to modern technology, his computer program is able to read him his story whenever he wants. He frequently takes advantage of this technology and often listens to the story several times a week. Recently Micah approached me with a concern about his story about Scott. He said, "Mom, I really think I wrote a good story but I don't like the part where I said that he doesn't have eyes." He paused as he tried to find the words that would accurately communicate his worry. "I think that if some people read that part, that they won't really get to know Scott. They might not understand who he really is; maybe they would just see a kid with no eyes. I think that I want to change that part of my story and instead say, "Scott has a good mind and a good smile."

He asked me to make those changes in his story. I did, with tears in my eyes and respect in my heart. Micah once again demonstrated that his true intelligence could never be measured on any of the standard I.Q. tests. The questions used on those tests never inquire into the quiet brilliance of a young man who understands his responsibility to help the world see Scott as a remarkable young man. Just wanted you to know how Scott's Story and Micah's Story continue in wonderful ways.

Janice Fialka

Micah planting peace pole for Marsha at 24 Thome.

Brief Amazing Moments of Inclusion

Janice Fialka

"Real inclusion" of kids with special needs occurs both outside the classroom, as well as inside. This is a fairly basic principle. However it is not always easy to make it happen.

When our son started high school we thought long and hard about what after-school activities would engage him, keep him healthy, and help him stay connected to his peers in a natural way. As we explored our options, we were fortunate that Micah had a peer mentor, an experienced junior in high school who helped us think through Micah's choices. J.J. was the captain of the high school cross country running team so it may have been natural for him to suggest that Micah join the team.

"Great idea!" my husband and I thought. J.J. could support Micah in becoming part of the team. Micah would be physically active every day after school, and would be hanging out with his new peers. Perfect! It never crossed OUR minds that Micah rarely walks briskly, let alone runs. But that was a minor point—for us. For Micah, running was the farthest thing from his mind. Very far. But he liked J.J, he liked hanging out with an UPPER classman, and he was willing to try it—"for two weeks, Mom."

Three weeks into the season (he made it beyond the two week trial period—our plan was working!) we received a phone call from Micah's coach. The coach asked if my husband and I could meet with him within the next couple of days to talk. "Of course," I responded, but my heart sunk to the basement floor.

We set a date, but I knew what was happening. The coach was getting to know Micah, and was realizing that our son was NOT a runner. My spirits sunk as I anticipated that I would have to "go back to the drawing board" to find something else he might do after school. Perhaps I would have to stage an "inclusion fight." It wouldn't be the first.

So we went into the meeting prepared to be told that it just wasn't working out. The coach greeted us and then quickly began. "I want to talk with you about a goal I have for Micah."

" Goal" I said to myself. "G-O-AL, goal."

The coach continued, "I would like Micah to run one mile in one of the cross country meets in a few weeks (For those of you who are, like me, new to high school sports, cross country meets are 5 kilometers long or about 3 miles.)

"You mean you are not going to tell me it's not working out? You mean Micah can stay on the team? You mean you have a goal for him?" I didn't say these things out loud, but I was shouting them silently. "Bravo!" I thought. We did not have to stage an "inclusion fight!" We did not have to convince anyone that my son should be included. Instead all we had to do was say, "Yes, Coach. That's a great idea!" All we had to do was let the Coach coach while we sat back in the stands watching our son run. We liked this a lot!"

To this day, I am sure Coach has no idea how thrilled and relieved we felt about his GOAL for our son.

At this same meeting, the coach made another request. He explained that during one practice a week, the kids ran for several miles in local neighborhoods. He worried that because Micah had a "bit slower" pace (those were his words!) Micah was often left behind and alone. Coach was concerned for Micah's safety. I suggested that on those days Micah could skip practice and run with me at home. Coach quickly disagreed, saying, "No, I want him to remain connected with the school and team. I was wondering if it would be okay if he spent that practice in the weight room in the school gym, running on the treadmill. I want Micah's running routine to be as closely aligned to the team as possible."

Whaam! Another surprise—a welcome surprise! "Sounds perfect." I said, hardly believing what I heard.

I left the meeting pleased and excited. I met a man, a high school coach, who had probably never read anything by Marsha Forest or Jack Pearpoint, didn't subscribe to Inclusion News but who understood "inclusion" from his heart and not from any mandate. He just "got it" and we were thrilled.

In mid-October of his freshman year, on one of those glorious autumn days with a backdrop of blue skies, orange and yellow leaves dancing lightly in the sweet, soft breeze, Micah ran in his first meet. We videotaped all 11 minutes and 32 seconds of his run. Best friends came to watch, I choked back my tears of pride, and his team cheered. "Go, Micah! You can do it!"

In May as we began to think about his sophomore year, we learned that Micah's cross country coach would not be coaching the next year. This news sent me into a downward spiral. When parents find adults who believe in their child, they cling like Velcro. I did NOT want him to leave the coaching position. Still, what could we do?

At the end-of-the-year meeting to plan for Micah's sophomore year, we met the new coach. I eyed him suspiciously, wondering if he knew how terrific my son was, if he knew how desperately we wanted Micah to be a part of this experience. I quickly learned the answer to that question. This new coach stated, in a clear, unwavering voice "I have a goal for Micah. I want him to run in EVERY meet and I want him to increase his distance to two miles."

We beamed, nodding our head, too stunned to find the words to express our excitement. (again, no "inclusion fight") Micah's reaction to the coach's goal was a bit different. He groaned, muttering "Two miles . . . No way, Mom!"

While delighting in the day's success later that night, I thought of Adrienne Rich, a wonderful poet. She wrote about growing older and wiser and recalling the lessons she had learned along the way. She said, "I live now, not as a leap, but as a succession of brief amazing moments, each one making possible the next."

This describes Micah's cross country story perfectly. There were many amazing moments, each building on the previous one. J.J., his peer mentor, opened the door to cross country. Micah's first coach opened the door to his running in his first meet. Micah's second coach opened the door to his running EVERY meet and running longer. And this year, his junior year, the new captain and a couple of other kids are driving Micah home from practice every day.

Everything is not perfect. "Real" inclusion is hard work, an ideal, something to move toward, something like a cross country run. Micah's cross country career evolved over time, without huge leaps! Micah has learned that he must run every single part of the mile to get to HIS finish line.

There's a lesson in that for me as well. All of us who believe in inclusion have to run every part of the inclusion course. I cannot LEAP onto the finish line without running the entire course (darn it!). Some of the tracks are smooth and straight, others have steep hills, twists, and turns. But each part must be run. Each part is connected to the previous section. Each part must be encountered, traveled, taken. As Micah has learned, we all must keep a steady pace, look ahead, keep breathing. Be encouraged by the cheering. Move forward at our own pace. We'll probably groan as Micah did--"Two miles! No way, Mom!"

But, we, like Micah are spurred on toward our goal. There are no leaps in cross country running but there can be many brief amazing moments.

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PATH in Action...

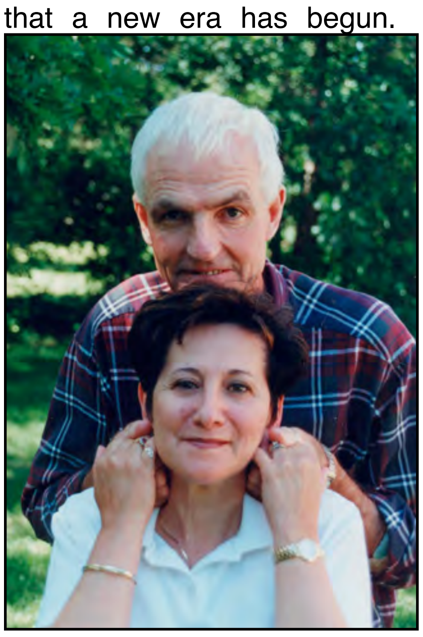
John Robson

In the last month we have put on three - two day Creative Facilitation Workshops. One was at MaMaWi for a variety of aboriginal organizations; another for an Interlake Health Promotion group which was in Gimli (they presented me with a wildly multicolored Viking hat, complete with horns); and the final one for a group of "Tenant Relations Officers" who work for the Manitoba Housing Authority. All responded positively to PATH, Solution Circles and the other tools. The Gimli folks were most "on fire" and featured a lot of Public Health Nurses, Health Educators etc. The leader of the group wrote back to let us know that they were using the tools including at a large planning meeting for the "Gimli Healthy Community" initiative.

We have also done a number of organizational PATH's of late, including one for a large senior management group of the Manitoba Housing Authority, one for a parents group of a small Catholic School, and for Correctional Services Canada (Aboriginal Services) - Native Inmate Aboriginal Gang Prevention Program. We will be doing a PATH to help them kick off this new, rather daunting initiative.

The Four Arrows Regional Health Authority gang I have been working with these last three years just reached a significant plateau. They finally took over responsibility for all First Nation regional health services in their area. The final steps involved tricky, messy, but successful maneuvering to get control and money out of the hands of their old Tribal Council. The journey has been long and tortuous and is certainly not over yet. They are now calling me their Grand Chief (followed usually by hoots of laughter). But they do seem to realize that a new era has begun. They just got a cheque for $225,000 from Ottawa deposited in their own account. They now see that they must produce and not simply criticize the many bad guys who have wasted resources in the past.

At their last Board meeting, I asked them to reflect on the origins of their cooperative journey together i.e.) a PATH conducted in February 1999 in a crummy little room in St. Theresa Point First Nation. It was at that point they generated enough hope to start the journey of working together. They were four separate First Nation communities with no road access to the outside world. They were connected to each other by water or winter ice road and/or air, with extremely limited real communication between communities. They recalled that at the end of that PATH, I asked them for a feeling word about their PATH. One guy remembered saying it was "exuberating". Another fellow said "that ain't even a word". The first guy said, "I don't care. That's the way I feel anyway"!


John & Nerina Robson

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Does this path have a heart? If it does, the
path is good. If it doesn't, it is of no use.
Carlos Castanedas

The Buddhists have some advice:
Act always as if the future of the universe depended on what you did, while laughing at yourself for thinking that whatever you do makes any difference.

It is this serious playfulness, this combination of concern and humility, that makes it possible to be both engaged and carefree at the same time.
Trich Nhat Hanh

Life with Felicia and Maria

Rose Galati

Recently I was asked for a little update on my daughter Felicia's life. I can't count the number of times that people have asked me to share what was going on in the lives of the Galati girls - as if what was happening for them was so out of the ordinary. I always thought, "Oh, how lovely. People just want to know how things are going with our family." Well, over the past six to eight months I've received quite an education. The following is some of what I think I've learned.

As far as Dominic and I are concerned, life with Felicia and Maria has been great. We wish that we could have had much more time with Maria but that wasn't in our control and we need to draw the best out of the experience of having her for such a short time. Is this possible? Yah, yup, uh-huh. The young people who came in contact with Maria, especially the ones that Dom and I didn't even know about until Maria's funeral, all said that Maria was the most important person they met at school. She gave them a direction in life; she put them in touch with who they were and who they wanted to become. She gave them the ability to project themselves into the future and see themselves as loving parents, gifted teachers, caring nurses and social workers, optometrists, chiropractors and all manner of regular folk who are comfortable with giving to each other. In short, she gave them a realization of their capacity to make a difference. What more can Dominic, Felicia and I ask of the youngest member of our family. I continue to see Maria landing here and there wherever videos of her are shown or stories of her are told and continuing to make a difference.

Felicia's days have changed dramatically since January, 2001. Dominic and I have been discouraged, like many parents, about the lack of available help in the community. For five years, since Felicia's "release " from high school, she has been working in the community in a variety of settings. The job placements were prepared, chosen, established, and staffed by me and Dominic and have not changed for five years - until this past May. It's a long story but suffice to say that Felicia has not been away from the house on a regular basis for about two and a half to three months. We cannot find a good, reliable assistant for Felicia. Now, is this hard? Oh, yah! Who is it hard on? All of us. Most of all it is hard watching our customarily very happy daughter become irritable, loud, angry and frightened. It's hard. What positive message can we possibly glean from these events? I think I've learned that this is one of the things that people in the general public have been afraid of for so long. Many people have only seen people with challenging needs who are angry and trapped in unfulfilling, boring and stifling lives and are afraid that these unwelcome behaviors will enter their lives too when they open themselves up to inviting this person into their space. They do not often see the changes until they have welcomed a Felicia into their surroundings, but when they do, they realize they can make a difference.

Well, we learned that Felicia has indeed been happy with the life she had when she was busy working five mornings a week and out to YMCA in the afternoons. We also learned that we need to get it going again for her because being at home day in and day out has made Felicia depressed. We now know, without a doubt, that Felicia was enjoying what we were guessing was a good day for her. The fear that must grow when things are out of one's control is real. The pain of having nothing to do is real. The capacity of our daughter to communicate her displeasure is real. We hear you Felicia and believe me we're on it!

Our next task is to help the new young woman we just hired to get into the swing of Felicia's day and re-establish the job placements. We are starting with a letter to the employers letting them know how much Felicia has missed her work and her colleagues.

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The Evaluation Game

Lynne Elwell

The Form Letter You NEVER want to See

Date____________

Dear___________________ (parent)
Re____________________ students name.

We want to do a case study evaluation on your child because s/he is having B-I-G trouble at school. S/he can't (tick which applies):

☐ Read
☐ Write
☐ Do math's
☐ Go to the toilet alone
☐ Play without biting someone (often a child, occasionally a teacher)
☐ All of the above.

We want to find out why your child is such a mess. We suspect that it may be your fault, but need to know for sure. A whole bunch of professional people are going to spend hours and hours and hours with you and your child; pulling her/him out of class frequently so s/he can get even further behind with her/his work; pulling you out of your job so you can get even further behind with your work; and generally disrupting your schedule and your life.

Eventually, we will get done. Don't ask us when because we don't really know. Honestly, we are doing the very best we can with a small, frustrated staff who have no office space in the schools and who, therefore, must test your child in the caretakers broom closet, or if that is not available, the car park. If you make a fuss about how long it takes, we may cry.

When we do get done, we'll meet you at school at a mutually inconvenient time. There will be 172 sheets of paper on the table, and we will pass them around, and around, and around, and around and you will get to sign them again and again and again. You might get dizzy. If yours is the last meeting of the day, the staff will definitely be dizzy . We'll make an attempt to explain everything to you at the meeting. Don't worry if you don't understand all the big words. We don't understand them either, but they sure look impressive on the forms, don't they?

At the end of all this, we'll have no clue why your child is in B-I-G trouble at school but we will have some new and exciting ideas for you and the teachers to try out. And, we'll all live happily ever after (until its time for the re-evaluation, when the entire process starts again.)

Sign Here __________________________

Sign here __________________________
to show you really mean it.

Social Security Number ________________

Master Card/Visa number ______________

Insurance Policy No: __________________

Special Needs Statement attached for amusement

WHITE Copy Tony Blair
YELLOW Copy David Blunkett
PINK Copy HeadTeacher
GOLDENROD copy Case manager
PURPLE copy School Nurse
GREEN copy SENCO
CRIMSON copy School Secretary
COPY you can't read - parents
BROWN copy P.P. officer
GRAY copy School File

Submitted by a Quasi Professional
E-mail: lynne.partners@virgin.net

ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY STUDENT ATTITUDES

TOWARD PEERS WITH DISABILITIES

Gary Bunch

A recent study indicates considerable differences in attitudes of students in special education model and inclusive model elementary and secondary schools toward peers with disabilities. Most marked were differences at the secondary level. Findings were based on one on one interviews with students in grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, and secondary graduating year in Canadian schools.

Friendships:

- In Special Education model schools students were aware of peers with disabilities but social and academic separation was apparent. Secondary students knew few peers with disabilities by name and friendships were rare. Elementary students did know the names of some peers with disabilities when integration programs were in place. Friendships were uncommon.
- Students in inclusively structured schools knew the names of peers with disabilities. Academic and social relationships were the order of the day. Many elementary and secondary students indicated that they were friends of peers with disabilities. Some students were known to pretend friendship in order to gain some type of advantage.

Teasing and Insulting Behavior:

- Teasing and insulting of peers with disabilities was a dynamic in Special Education model schools, particularly at the secondary level. Name calling, planned public embarrassment, and negative physical reactions to the presence of peers with disabilities were reported. Teasing and insulting behavior was attributed to a focus on differences, opportunities to set up situations humourous to non-disabled peers, and active desire to avoid association with peers with disabilities.
- Teasing and insulting behavior occurred in Inclusive model schools, but was described as rare. Those who tormented peers with disabilities were considered to lack maturity.

Advocacy for Peers with Disabilities:

- Many students in Special Education model secondary schools reported that they actively intervened when peers with disabilities were tormented, though some chose not to be involved. Elementary students reported few instances where advocacy was required.
- As few instances of tormenting behavior were reported in Inclusive model schools, responses tended to be hypothetical, "if I were to see something", scenarios. Within that context secondary students indicated that they would intervene personally or report an incident to authorities. A number of interviewees suggested that peers acting inappropriately might be helped by an educational program which discussed disability and its effects. A subset volunteered the view that some teachers might benefit from such a program as well.

Support for Exclusion or Inclusion:

- Students in Special Education model schools supported full time or part time segregation for peers with disabilities. Students with disabilities were believed to need help which could be provided only in segregated environments. Few questioned the Special Education model. None suggested an Inclusive model.
- Inclusive model students rarely mentioned placement other than in the regular classroom for peers with disabilities. It was accepted that peers with disabilities could succeed at their own level and that it was a peer responsibility to support them in their work. The few mentions of Special Education placement indicated that such placement was inappropriate and not needed.

It is hoped that this study soon will be reported in the literature in fuller form. The recentness of completion has not permitted the time needed to draft a full report. Findings presented above are preliminary in nature.

Gary Bunch, York Univ, gbunch@yorku.on.ca

Inclusion Goes to College: A Call To Action

Cate Weir, Carol Tashie, Zach Rossetti

For all of her life, Kathy was told her disabilities would prevent her from achieving academic goals, especially the pursuit of a college education. Her high school years were spent sitting in special education classrooms, excluded from the college preparatory classes she wanted to attend. "College is out of the question," she was told. Her teachers and guidance counselors encouraged her to be "realistic" about her future plans. But Kathy wouldn't listen. When she was 27 years old, she contacted the local college and said, "I want to take some classes." And now, two years later, she is pursuing her college degree at the New Hampshire Community Technical College at Manchester. The college has provided accommodations, tutorial support, and assistive technology that assist her in achieving her goals. Vocational Rehabilitation provides support in goal setting and in purchasing equipment she needs. The local adult support agency provides help at her home with class assignments. The Assistive Technology Low Interest Loan program lent her money to buy a computer. And most importantly, Kathy has provided the energy, hard work and unwavering commitment to her goal. Together, this collaboration works to support Kathy's dreams.

Jesse is also a college student, studying Veterinary Technology. In many ways, she is a typical college student. She studies hard, worries about exams and struggles with the Latin terms in animal anatomy and physiology. But if you ask her about her experiences, you will realize she is also, in many ways, unique. Jesse has many labels that have led many people to believe she doesn't belong – and never would succeed - in college. But she is succeeding in her goal to attend college and earn an associate's degree. Jesse is reaching her goal with the help of hard work, family support, an individually designed major that fits her career goals, and an academic advisor that knows her potential and is working creatively with Jesse and the college faculty. In her own words: "When I was born, they told my parents I should be in an institution. Well, today, I am in an institution, but it's an institution of higher education."

In the past few years, individuals with labels of severe disabilities and their families have been declaring that access to college must be a choice for everyone. Advocates like Kathy and Jesse and others have challenged society's prejudices and taken their rightful places on college and university campuses throughout the country. But just as it was when students with severe disabilities moved from fully inclusive elementary schools to high schools that were less than welcoming, there remains the perception that higher education is "unrealistic," "too difficult," or even a "waste of time and money" for some people.

Although it is widely acknowledged that higher education is critical in terms of employability and lifelong earnings, it is still commonplace to exclude people with labels of severe disabilities from college, based on out-dated notions of disability and achievement. But is it reasonable and just to advocate for full inclusion in elementary and high schools, and still allow college to remain outside the grasp of so many? In other words, does full inclusion go to college?

The struggle for educational equity for students with disabilities has been expanding since the beginning—from the front door to the classroom door, from elementary school to high school, from social integration to high academic expectations. For twenty-five years, powerful advocacy has taken place to assure that all students have real places in their public schools. But, in that same period of time, rarely has college been discussed. For many, there continues to exist a belief that individuals with severe disabilities could never be successful in college. This misguided reality, based on out-dated assumptions about what labels mean in terms of intelligence and competence, is often coupled with paternalism and motivated by a desire to protect people from what is imagined to be certain failure. These factors work together to make dreams of college seem silly, unrealistic, and even dangerous for certain people.

Along with these assumptions and fears about disability and college success, there also exists a passive approval of the entrance criteria colleges use to judge suitability for acceptance. These criteria continue to be based on narrow definitions of intelligence, potential, and academic success. Therefore, when a high school algebra teachers claims that a student with severe disabilities doesn't belong in *her* classroom, the challenges are loud and sustained. But when a college admission counselor advises the exact same thing, there is curious silence. It is time to dispute exclusionary practices at colleges and universities.

The passage of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 made it illegal for the vast majority of colleges and universities to discriminate on the basis of disability. However, it was not until the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1991 that most post secondary institutions began to take this responsibility seriously. As a result, the percentage of students with disabilities attending college has increased, from just 2.6% in 1978 to 11% in 1997. However, this increase reflects primarily those students with disabilities who still fit the mold of a "traditional" college student. In fact, the language of the ADA, specifically the clause regarding "otherwise qualified," has been used to exclude many students with severe disabilities from colleges and universities of their choosing.

One of the challenges to this call to action is that colleges and universities, by nature and design, have historically been exclusive places. Higher education has been used throughout time to "separate the wheat from the chaff," and to educate only a "worthy" subset of our citizens. But why do we need to continue to accept this? President Clinton, in his 1997 State of the Union address, pronounced ". . . every 18-year-old must be able to go to college, and all adults must be able to keep on learning." Those of us who advocate full inclusion for all citizens must begin to challenge this exclusive domain.

In order to ignite this change, we must also challenge the attitudes of paternalism and protectiveness that limit people's choices and chances, at the cost of real self-determination. Assumptions about ability and capability have led many of us to advise students to avoid college, because we "know" how hard college is and we "believe" they don't have what it takes to succeed. Although this may be seen, by some, as a "kindness," oppression in the name of protection is still oppression.

As a result of the activism of individuals and their families, as well as the work of a few federal initiatives, the doors to a college education are beginning to crack open. There are students with labels of severe disabilities who are pursuing their educational dreams and, in so doing, shattering many of society's assumptions. However, in our haste to move forward, some dangerous missteps are occurring. Some colleges are designing or hosting programs that do little more than move the special education classroom to the college campus. Some school districts are developing partnerships with one or more community colleges to run "transition programs" for their post graduates with severe disabilities. Some colleges are allowing students with severe disabilities access to non-academic classes, with little regard for student choice, grades, or college credits. And while some may view these things as "a good start" or "better than nothing," it is indeed a slippery slope down which dreams of inclusive college communities can easily slide. We must learn from the past and refuse to support the development of special classes or programs on college campuses, for they, like special education classes in public schools, will eventually need to be dismantled in favor of real inclusive choices.

It is time to recognize that the values and beliefs of inclusion -- labels are not informative, disability is a social construct, and all of us are enriched by a diverse community -- apply to higher education as well. We must work to support people with severe disabilities in the attainment of their goals and acknowledge that, in fact, inclusive education means college, too!

This article is supported in part by the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services grant #H078C60074 and the Office of Post Secondary Education grant #P333A990035. The contents of this paper do not necessarily represent the policy or position of the U.S. Department of Education.

In But Not With: A Look at Educational Practice Barriers to Friendship

Carol Tashie & Zach Rossetti

It has been said that every good idea contains the seeds of its own perversion. Inclusion is no exception. Far too many students who are educated in general education classes are subjected to educational practices, whether they be pull-out services, curriculum modifications made disrespectful of a student's chronological age and abilities, or the over-reliance on paraprofessional supports, that serve as significant barriers to both educational success and social connected-ness. These educational practices are not inclusion! Instead, they perpetuate the belief that students with disabilities are somehow deficient and must be provided with an educational experience different from all other students. These practices, which stem from the attitudinal barriers discussed in earlier articles, impede not only the development of true and reciprocal relationships, but are, in fact, antithetical to inclusive education. And, while the authors acknowledge that far too many students with disabilities are still educated in segregated classrooms and schools (which, of course, is an indefensible barrier to both social and educational accomplishment for any student), this article addresses the educational practice barriers that continue to exist even for students who are educated in general education classrooms.

Pull Outs and Segregated Classes:

The class was doing "daily oral language" when Donovan left to go to the special education classroom. When he returned the class was engaged in a lively discussion of Argentina, sparked by a student's comment about his visiting uncle. Donovan rejoined the class but never felt connected to the unexpected experience the rest of his classmates shared.

It should go without saying that students need to be together in order to develop respect, mutual interests, and real friendships. However, for too many students with disabilities, even those who are in general education classes, their school day still consists of separate places and lessons. Far too many students with disabilities continue to be "pulled out" of their classrooms to receive services from therapists and special educators. This practice, besides having questionable educational value, significantly impacts the student's ability to make friends. The student who leaves the classroom misses important opportunities to connect with classmates around content, knowledge, and activities. He often returns to the classroom unsure as to what he missed or to what the class has moved on. And as described in Roberta Schnorr's classic article, "Peter . . . He comes and goes" (1990), other students view the student who is often out of the classroom as someone significantly different from themselves. Clearly these are not optimal conditions for developing social relationships.

Low Expectations:

Trey's teacher was leading a spirited discussion on slavery and asking students to voice their opinions on its modern day implications. When Trey raised his hand, the teacher asked him to tell the class his favorite color. His classmates were silent during his answer and then quickly resumed their boisterous discussion.

The ways in which a student is regarded by her classmates is strongly influenced by how he is perceived and treated by his teachers. Therefore, the likelihood that friendships will develop increases when people consider and treat the student as a valued, capable, and interesting person with a unique personality. When students with disabilities are consistently characterized by their labels (e.g., "a Downs student"), it is less likely that classmates will take the time to look past the label and get to know the person. When teachers and others who support a student with disabilities talk about that student as if he doesn't understand, a strong sense of disrespect and unworthiness is communicated. These and many other "not-so-subtle" messages convey to classmates that the student is "not worth knowing" and builds barriers to friendship.

Over-Reliance on Paraprofessionals:

When classmates were asked why no one ate lunch with Ani, her teachers expected to hear complaints of personal eating habits or difficulty with communication. Instead they got an earful: no one eats with Ani because no one wants to sit in the cafeteria with the adult that is always by Ani's side.

Students, especially as they get older, value their independence from adults. For too many students with disabilities, this independence is stifled by the presence of a paraprofessional or teacher. While these roles can be extremely useful in providing educational support, they can also act as barriers to students developing relationships with other classmates. Teachers and paraprofessionals must walk the delicate line of providing support when necessary and fading out of the picture as quickly as possible. Friendships are unlikely to develop when a third party is literally standing in the way.

Assumptions around Communication:

Maya came to Biology everyday always holding a leather notebook. Despite the fact that she always had an adult supporting her, it was not until the end of the semester that her classmates realized the notebook held the letterboard she used to communicate. The students were confused as to why they were never given information on how Maya communicated.

For many students with labels of disabilities, people continue to hold on to archaic assumptions that those labels actually mean these students are not able to communicate or have very little to say. Luckily, the advent of various forms of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), including Facilitated Communication (FC), has exposed this myth and has taught us that each and every person can and does communicate. It is up to us to "learn to listen" to what students are communicating, through their body language, facial expressions, and behavior. Likewise, we must be undeterred in exploring and discovering the key to supporting each student to have a more effective means of communication to supplement the ones he already has. And although having a sophisticated system of communication is not a pre-requisite for friendship, it is more difficult for two students to become friends when one does not have a good understanding of how the other person communicates. Therefore, classmates must be asked about and given all of the information they need about all of the various ways a particular student communicates, including expressions, gestures, behavior, and the use of any communication devices. And we must ask classmates to help us develop communication supports that are respectful of a student's interests and age.

Culture of Tolerance

The class was reading the book The Acorn People about a camp for children with disabilities. As an assignment, the teacher had the students write about their good fortune of having healthy bodies and how they would feel if they were one of the campers in the book.

Many schools work hard to instill in their students the value of "tolerance." And while the intent is admirable, this practice places another barrier in the path of genuine and reciprocal relationships. It is not enough to simply "tolerate" the differences among us, for tolerance implies a hierarchy of value. One prizes good health, but tolerates a cold. So what, then, is implied when we strive for schools and classrooms that tolerate disability? Teachers and administrators can create schools and classrooms that express in word and deed that disability is an integral part of our human community -- it is neither better nor worse, it is different. These schools and classes respect the differences in all of us, and demonstrate it through curriculums rich in multiculturalism, lessons taught through multiple intelligences, cooperation valued over competition, and belonging as a priority educational goal. These schools reject the notion of traditional "disability awareness" activities, which tend to teach students to view disability as something either undesirable or as greater than all of the person's other characteristics. Instead, these teachers embed the contributions that people with disabilities have made in all walks of life into their standard lessons. These schools and classrooms celebrate the differences among us -- understanding that without these differences the world would be a very boring place indeed. And in these environments, the seeds for friendships between all students are sown.

Essential Considerations for Friendships

To connect best educational practices and the ways in which they affect friendship, a list of questions, entitled "Essential Considerations for Friendships" has been developed. Use these questions to honestly assess the educational practices in your school. All "no" answers should be considered opportunities to improve both the educational and social outcomes for all students in your schools.

Questions to ask about School Practices

Is the student fully included in all aspects of school, and family, and community life? Students must share time, space, and shared activities in order for friendships to develop. Most friendships are born from common experiences and interests. Remember full inclusion is defined as the student attending the general education classroom she would attend if she didn't have disabilities and being supported to be a successful, full time, and valued learner.

Does the student have a way to communicate all day long? Although a system of communication is not a pre-requisite for friendship, it is more difficult for two people to become friends without the ability to communicate with one another. All students must be supported to have effective means of communication. Additionally, all forms of the student's communication (body, gestural, behavioral) must be respected and listened to.

Are the materials, expectations, conversations, and modifications used each day age-appropriate for the student's chronological age? Friendships among students tend to be with other students of similar ages. All ways of interacting with the student must be respectful of her age and grade.

Does the student have opportunities to give as well as receive support in the classroom? Friendships are often born from a respect and admiration among students of one another's unique gifts and talents and involve an equitable relationship.

Are supports brought into the classroom instead of the student being "pulled-out" of the classroom? Friendships tend to occur between students who are viewed as more alike than different. When just one student leaves the room for a part of his or her day, the message of "this student is different than you..." is clearly sent to the other students.

Is people-first language used? Saying, "a child with a label of autism," acknowledges the child as a person first. Saying, "an autistic child," put the greatest emphasis on the label. Children make friends with other children, not labels.

Are dignity and respect high priorities for those who teach and support the student? Talking to or about a student in an age-inappropriate manner conveys a lack of respect and dignity.

Does everyone who supports the student presume his/her competence and make decisions based on the highest of expectations? When a student is not able to effectively communicate his complex thoughts or knowledge, teams should assume that the student is understanding all that is said and taught and should treat the student accordingly. The "least dangerous assumption" is always presumed competence.

Do educators know how to modify the regular curriculum so that the student is both an active participant in all activities and learning meaningful skills and knowledge? If one student is always working on separate activities away from the group, it gives the message that she or he is not really "one of us" and all students are denied opportunities for friendships to occur.

Does the classroom environment celebrate diversity? In classrooms where the strengths, abilities, and unique gifts of all students are acknowledged and celebrated, friendships between students with and without disabilities are more likely to develop.

Does the class membership reflect natural proportions of students with and students without disabilities? If several students with disabilities are clustered into one class, it is likely that these students will be viewed as a group, rather than as individuals. This is an obvious barrier to friendship.

Do students with disabilities use the same places, people, and things in the school building as students without disabilities? Special teachers, special places, and special expectations perpetuate separateness, not belonging and true membership. All students should be supported to go to the nurse when sick, the principal when in trouble, the library for a quiet place to work.

Does the student ride the regular school bus? Friendships often develop in places other than the classroom. The playground, the cafeteria, the bus, walking to and from school are all fertile ground for friendship to grow.

Is friendship considered a priority goal? For some teams, IEPs reflect only paperwork obligations and friendship has no meaningful place. For others, the IEP is the record of the highest priorities for the year and clearly friendship belongs right there!

Is the student supported to participate in typical extracurricular activities of his/her choosing? Friendships are born and grow during and after school hours. Students should be supported to participate in any and all extracurricular activities (school-sponsored or otherwise) based on their personal interests and desires.

Is there a system of communication established between home and school? Friendships go beyond the school day! Schools can provide families with great information about potential friends, opportunities for students to get together, and typical ways in which students connect. Families can provide schools with information about their children's interests, neighborhood friends, and ways in which their children most easily connect with others their age.

Is someone on the team designated to coordinate intentional facilitation of social relationships? Although some friendships develop without help from anyone, many students require the support of someone to "intentionally" facilitate their connections with others. Intentional facilitation is the art of coordinating information about the student's interests and desires with what's typical for others his/her age, and supporting relationships via naturally occurring opportunities for connections.

Are friendships "allowed" to end? Some friendships last forever, others are more situational. It's important to acknowledge this and not to see "former friendships" as failures, but rather as evidence of true inclusion. Teams must be willing to review and refine the process of facilitation of social relationships on a regular basis.

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Reflections: 9-11

Dave Hingsburger

She is crying when she said, "Your audience may not come back." I had just taken my first break from a daylong lecture in Holland, Michigan. I was surprised by her distress. Only seconds later I was watching a television screen hanging in the long hotel hallway that connected the meeting rooms. We watched in dumb horror as we saw, live, people jump to their death.

On that eleventh day of the ninth month, we came back, a hundred and fifty grieving Americans and one shocked and saddened Canadian. We held a minute of silence. However, as I resumed my lecture I could feel something happening in my audience. Yes, they were listening to me, but slowly you could see jaws set, shoulders straighten, eyes dry. As a group they made the decision that they would see out the day. That we would stay there and work. We wouldn't let others take away the very ordinariness of our lives.

Throughout the day several came to speak to me, they had heard that the borders had closed. I was offered more than a dozen places to stay.

Resolve and compassion. This, I think is the way to respond to terror.

On the way back the border was opened to traffic and we drove our Volkswagen Beetle with all speed to get there before some further atrocity forced it closed again. More than fifteen miles of long trucks blocked our access to the border. A trucker waved us out and past. We slid in just before the toll bridge where we saw US custom's officials fully armed and fully alert standing watching all who would leave their country. They were not menacing, in fact their presence was oddly comforting.

As we went through customs, I said to the Canadian border guard, "It must have been a hard day." A tear rolled down her cheek. "It has," was all she said as she waved us on.

Watchfulness and grief. This, I think is the way to respond to terror.

We are to fly to Vancouver on the first flight that is approved to do so. We get on the plane and meet a flight crew that had been grounded for four days. I chatted with a flight attendant who told of the crew sitting in a hotel room staring at unimaginable images of, their workplace, a passenger jet, being used as an instrument of terror.

With the tension brittle on the plane, the door is closed and the flight attendants were told to ready the plane for take off.

I am sitting in the last row. Before the flight attendants take their seats all of them serving from first class to last row gathered in the galley behind me. Quietly they formed a circle and held onto each other. Someone prayed. Followed by another. Then another. Three languages. Three prayers. Then they disbursed throughout the plane. I felt that I had never before been on a plane that had been so well prepared for flight.

Fearfulness and faith. This, I think is the way to respond to terror.

My travels that weekend take me to my brother's fiftieth birthday party. While no one says it that night, we are all aware that there are thousands who will never celebrate another birthday, or anniversary, or wedding. Life, family and friendship seem more than abstract concepts, they seem vital, and very, very real. I notice, really notice, what a wonderful man my brother is and how grateful I am to be there with him that day.

On the ferry coming back to Vancouver from the Island, I sit in a row behind four men talking animatedly with one another. Having lived for a long time in Quebec I am no stranger to hearing a language I don't understand, so I don't pay attention. I notice, though, others noticing the group. Suddenly one of the men speaks, in English, with urgency. "No! We must speak English. They have to hear what we are talking about." Slowly Arabic becomes English. People do listen. They hear the group talking about someone who had gotten a little too drunk the night before. They hear the men talking about wives and families. Then they hear the men talking about the shock they each felt at watching towers fall into rubble. They hear the men talking about the same things that everyone else was talking about.

Hatred and racism. This is not the way, I think to respond to terror.

I go out for a drink when I get to Vancouver. As I sit down, I notice that the television station is playing something from the Comedy Station. I comment to the bartender that I had almost forgotten that laughter was part of the human vocabulary. He bought me a drink and said that he had resolved that day that he was going to now move past what had happened. That it would be disrespectful to the dead to let our lives, the one's they lived, be unalterably changed.

Up there on the screen was Lucy trying, too hard, to keep up to a chocolate making machine. Though the sound was off, I still laughed.

Life and laughter. This, I think, is the way to respond to terror.

Dave Hingsburger, Diverse City Press
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I believe we can change the world if we start listening to one another again. Simple, honest, human conversation. Not mediation, negotiation, problem-solving, debate, or public meetings. Simple, truthful conversation where we each have a chance to speak, we each feel heard, and we each listen well… The simplest way to begin finding each other again is to start talking about what we care about. If we could stop ignoring each other, stop engaging in fear-filled gossip, what might we discover?

Meg Wheatley, Turning to one another

Recessional on Sights Seen

Gary Bunch

It was all so neat and tidy.
With the brilliant blue sky
And fiercely burning yellow sun
Hovering over us above.

Everything was precisely set.
The two story rust brick buildings
And sharp delimiting fence lines
Intersected by roads and rails.

We visitors were gay in dress.
But more solemn in our aspect
Though bursts of animation cut
Through the heavy somnolent air.

We followed the textbooky guides.
In ragged duck-like chatty lines
We moved processionally
Peering at rooms, cells, and relics.

It was all too neat and tidy.
Too cleanly set out among green grass
We intruders too greatly removed
Our guides too dispassionate.

The past was too distorted to see.
To grasp the barbed real history
On a day so lovely and pristine
The day we visited Auschwitz.

The Day After

Budd Hall

The sun's rise has never been so brilliant
Threads of gold woven through pastel scarlets
The brightness of the light diamondizing the sea
Before me

The day after
The day after two aircraft
Turn back towards their makers
Guided by men driven mad by mission

The day after
The day after women and men are killed
The same number as were killed in Halabja **
A different time, a different cause

The day after
The day after women and men and boys and girls
Weep for their parents, their lovers
Their friends

Leaves of the Oak trees in the garden
Turn so slightly towards the sun
Not responding to the power of the star
But receiving its gift freely as it is given
Life for Life

Victoria, September 12, 2001
E-mail: bhall@uvic.ca

** Halabja is the small town in Iraq which Saddam Hussein chemical bombed on March 17, 1988. Over 5,000 citizens were killed, thousands more were maimed.

Advice to Professionals Who Must "Conference Cases"

Janice Fialka

Before the case conference,
I would look at my almost five-year-old son
And see a golden haired boy
Who giggled at his baby sister's attempts
to clap her hands.
Who charmed adults by his
spontaneous hugs and hellos.
Who captured his parents with
his rapture with music
and his care for white-haired people who walked
a walk
a bit slower than younger folks,
Who often became a legend in places
visited because of his
exquisite ability to befriend a few special souls,
Who often wanted to play "peace marches,"
And who, at the age of four
went to the Detroit Public Library
requesting a book on Martin Luther King.

After the case conference
I looked at my almost five-year-old son.
He seemed to have lost his golden hair.
I saw only words plastered on his face.
Words that drowned us in fear
and revolting nausea.
Words like:
Primary expressive speech and language disorder
severe visual motor delay
sensory integration dysfunction
fine and gross motor delay
developmental dyspraxia and RITALIN now.

I want my son back. That's all.
I want him back now.
Then I'll get on with my life.

If you could see the depth of this wrenching pain.
If you could see the depth of our sadness
then you would be moved to return
our almost five-year-old son
who sparkles in the sunlight
despite his faulty neurons.

Please give me back my son
undamaged and untouched by your labels, test
results, descriptions and categories.

If you can't, if you truly cannot
give us back our son
Then just be with us quietly,
gently and compassionately as we feel.
Sit patiently and attentively as
we grieve and feel powerless.
Sit with us and create a stillness
known only in small, empty chapels at sundown.
Be there with us
As our witness and as our friend.

Please do not give us advice, suggestions, comparisons or
another appointment. (That's for later.)
We want only a quiet shoulder upon which
to rest our too-heavy heads.

If you can't give us back our sweet dream
then comfort us through this nightmare.
Hold us. Rock us until morning light creeps in.
Then we will rise and begin the work of a new day.

excerpt from Janice Fialka's
It Matters: Lessons from my son
Available from: www.inclusion.com

The Warrior In Me

Ann Malatchi

Over the past few years I have found myself doing things I would never have considered in my earlier years! Although I have never been known as quiet, meek, or mild, I did try to work within the system. This meant I only rocked the boat—never tipped it over. I now recognize it is often necessary to turn the boat over in order for people to learn how to survive before we—and our children—drown.

Herb Lovett's work continues to inspire me as I journey deeper into the field of positive approaches. Images of Marsha over the years are bright and burning in my eyes, ears, voice and heart as I strive harder and harder to assure each child has an enviable life. I find myself willing and eager to interrupt individuals in public who are screaming at—or worse, hitting—their children. I have ended PATH processes when I became convinced they would merely become pieces of paper—sometimes with hidden agendas. I quit a job to move to a place I love and have the opportunity to work day to day with children in middle and high school.

For several years I have traveled across the country and abroad consulting with schools, agencies, and families. I find many schools saying they believe in and 'do' inclusion. Years ago Marsha challenged the boundaries of inclusion by asking how we deal with the 'Butwhatabout' kids. Inclusion is OK if kids behave. Inclusion is OK if we follow the rules. In many places today, I hear voices that I hoped had dried up and vanished. "Inclusion is OK, but when their behavior changes, then----we have places…" Perhaps I was just not hearing these past years.

As we struggle together to figure this out, I am becoming more of a warrior. I have non-negotiables. I am relentless about them. I upset people and anger others who continue to feel punishment is a viable option. Marsha gave me permission to tell myself it is OK for people to be angry with me. It's OK to tip over the boat filled with what has been, in order to swim to what should be. This is not an overnight or quick journey. I am on board until the end.

1. **Do no harm.** Be careful my words and actions are not punishing, humiliating, and harmful.

2. **Don't blame the kids.** What do we need to change about what we are doing? What needs to change in our classrooms? Is it the kid's behaviors or our behaviors that are challenging?

3. **Lose the ego**. We must quit taking the actions of our children personally!

4. **It's about relationships.** We must never forget many children do not have friends and do not know how to be friends. We must teach about friendship!

5. **Listen to the stories.** We must find out all we can from as many people as possible and together weave the story to discover what lies beneath.

6. **Ask the kids.** Our most valuable resource. Why do we keep forgetting to ask for their help and advice?

I am now where I belong. I am living in a community that believes in everyone; working in a school system that believes all children belong. All children are welcome at their neighborhood school. Together we will make it work.

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ICEBERG

Beth Gallagher

Don't judge him by your scorecard!
The view is bigger than
the picture you imagine.
Don't preach that respect will come
if he tries hard,
You have no idea what it is like to be him.
Lessons are taught by fathers,
grandfathers and ancestors.
And they have said, "Life is an exhibit
of values and achievements
You work hard and sell what you harvest
Barter… earn… build… spend…
make...produce…"
What a waste to see only
the palpable evidence.
Fear keeps us suspended on the surface.
Should we look below only to notice
the vast ignorance?
The glassy water keeps our heart
safely inaccessible to our head.
Someday we will be fathers,
grandfathers and ancestors.
Maybe we should alter the mantra
that others quote.
And they will say, "Life is an Iceberg.
It is made of two parts…
That which is obvious and is
apparent at first sight
And the rest, which is unknown
to those that won't dive deep.
Love…pain…courage…honesty…
curiosity…faith.

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Speaking of the King...

Bob Glass

When it comes to writing about being a person known for kindness and tenderness, I think this story illustrates the path by which most of us acquire the qualities. In my middle age, I have become incredibly, indelibly impressed with the awesome power of a simple act of kindness. Let me tell you a true story:

When I was a kid, I had an absolutely story-book childhood. Opie Taylor in Mayberry, is the closest comparison I can make. My dad was a pharmacist and had a very prosperous drug store in the mountains of Virginia. I could write a book on how pleasant and memorable those days were, but I won't right now. I just want to share one of the foundation moments of my relationship with my dad that has affected most of my life.

One afternoon, when I was about 6 years old, the store was busy and I was back at the prescription counter watching my dad and another pharmacist count pills, fill bottles and type labels just as fast as they could. My dad noticed me and stopped what he was doing. He came over and crouched beside me in the entrance to the prescription department, and whispered in my ear, "Honey, would you like to know the secret to my success?" I could tell by his eyes and the tone of his voice that I was about to hear one of the most important things a father can tell his son. I looked him in the eyes and shook my head yes.

Pointing from the prescription counter to the front door, he said, "See that front door? I'll tell you my secret. Every person that comes through that front door just wants three things: a little personal attention from you; a fair price on what they need; and service with a smile."

"That's it?" I asked.

"That's it," he replied.

"Well I can do that!" I exclaimed with delight. And from that point on, my program was set. I was the happiest kid you could ever meet. Whether I was delivering prescriptions on my bike to people in their homes, picking up a shipment at the bus station, or waiting on someone standing in the aisles, my dad's formula was firmly imprinted in my mind and set my behavior. It was fun. I was good. I knew everybody in town and everybody knew me.

People loved us. And the business kept growing like crazy. What a natural way to conduct yourself! And as far as I could tell, life was perfect. But no one gets away with a perfect life.

At the ripe old age of 41, my dad worked himself to death. I was 10 years old that awful Monday morning my mom had to wake me up and tell me my dad had died of a heart attack while I was sleeping that night. My sister, the oldest, left the state for college a couple of months later. My older brother left the state for college, too, a year later, and the next thing I knew, it was just my mom and I trying to keep the store going. We were open seven days a week from 8 am to 9pm and Sundays from noon to six. When I wasn't at school, I was at the store. I usually worked every Sunday after church so all the other employees could take a break.

And so it was until one beautiful Sunday afternoon one summer when I was about 12. We had a substitute pharmacist in the back and I had the rest of the store to run that day. It was unusually slow and I was sitting at the soda fountain reading the Sunday comics because we had no customers.

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I saw a huge bus pull to a stop right at the front door, and then a second bus pulled in right behind it. The door of the bus opened and this huge parade of people in their Sunday best church clothes began stepping off and walking right through the front door and taking seats at the counter. "Oh my God!" I thought, "It's show time!"

I jumped up, ran behind the counter, grabbed an order pad, and started taking orders. I was well underway when the pharmacist came running from the back. She grabbed me and whispered in my ear, "Just ignore them!"

"What?????" I asked.

"Just ignore them!" she repeated.

"What on earth are you talking about? There must be 60 people in here!"

"Just ignore them!" she said for a third time. "We don't serve black people here when they sit down at the lunch counter. Just ignore them and they will get tired of waiting and leave!"

Her words went through me like an electrical shock. I looked up at the crowd and saw she was right. Everybody in the store was black except for her and me.

"I guess this means you're not going to help me, " I said. She said not another word. Spun around and headed back to the prescription department.

I on the other hand, began moving at light speed...taking orders....fixing drinks...and slapping together sandwiches. Everyone was very patient, very chatty and eventually ate. It was exhilarating and it was exhausting. When everyone had finished, they again waited patiently while I rang up their bills. When I got to the man whom I figured must have been the preacher, he did something to me that only happened about once a year... when he paid his bill he smiled and told me to keep the change. The last one on the bus, when he boarded, the buses left and disappeared down Main Street.

The pharmacist didn't speak to me the rest of the day and I really can't recall anyone else coming in the store afterwards, but I do remember ringing out the register at closing time and getting the receipts and deposit together. It was an amazing day of sales at the fountain. $198.37 in sales. I was astounded. Back then you could get a hot dog with chili and a Coke for a quarter. This had been a huge day, and I was very pleased with the work I had done. I even got a 48-cent tip from the preacher!

It was not until some time much later when heroes were dead and legends were being written that I learned about Dr. Martin Luther King and the Freedom Riders who took buses from Washington DC to Birmingham, Alabama that Summer. And how they had stopped for lunch one Sunday afternoon at a Whites Only lunch counter in the mountains of Virginia and got -- not what they had feared -- but, instead, a little personal attention; exactly what they ordered at the price that was posted; and service with a smile. Atrocities had met them elsewhere, but not on my shift.

As I have grown older, I have learned that experience was what we call a defining moment, when one discovers who he is. There is probably a book I could write on all the ramifications of that encounter, not the least of which has to do with growing up with prejudice, and spending every day of my life for 12 years in store with employees that I honestly did not know would not serve Blacks at the lunch counter. But I did start seeing the signs from then on and they were everywhere. Can you imagine really seeing for the first time what a colored water fountain is?

The point that impresses me the very most about this event is to think about what would have happened if that bus had stopped at any other time during the week when any other employee would have been working except me. You don't need much insight to know that my little community would still be living under a cloud of infamy to this day, much like Selma, Alabama does. An absolutely shameful chapter in American history was not written in Virginia that day because a young adolescent merely practiced a simple act of kindness.

This is the first time I have ever written about the afternoon I sold an egg salad sandwich to a stranger named Dr. King.

Never underestimate the value of your "shift" and what happens when you are on your "shift." The words of my father ring true: Give everyone that comes through the front door a little personal attention, fairness and service with a smile.

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I long to accomplish a great and noble task, but it is my chief duty to accomplish small tasks as if they were great and noble.

Helen Keller

FACILITATORS FORUM – A RHODE ISLAND EXPERIMENT

Jo Krippenstapel

Margaret Wheatley, noted scientist cum organizational consultant, has said, “It’s a revolutionary act these days to reflect.” If this is so, then there is a small but not insignificant revolution happening in Rhode Island.

For the past two years a group of about thirty individuals has gathered regularly to reflect on the capacities that contribute to effective facilitation. The group is drawn together by two compelling questions: “How can we expand the number of people who are competent in facilitating conversations that support better lives for individuals, more competent organizations, and richer community life? How can these facilitators be encouraged to reflect and learn together, over time, in a way that nurtures a community of learning about the art and practice of facilitation?”

The thirty people who have been attracted to each other around these questions have named their group the Facilitators Forum. The group includes staff from many organizations that offer residential and day supports, the state’s Division of Developmental Disabilities, and parent and self-advocacy organizations. Family members and people who receive services have recently joined the group. Some had prior experience and training in facilitation. Several had training in one or more of approaches to person centered planning. Quite typically, these individuals found themselves called upon by others for support and assistance in thinking through complex challenges in individual and organizational life.

A visitor to a Facilitators Forum might hear the group engaging in these conversations:

Ø The “sweaty palms promise”. There is no “membership” in this group, no formal rules about anything – with one exception. There is agreement that if a member of the group says, “I have this invitation to facilitate, and my palms are sweating” , then the group must figure out a way to support that person. So at a Facilitators Forum one might hear someone say, “I’ve been invited by my supervisor to take a leadership role in improving the quality of services that we offer to two men who share an apartment. I want someone from this group to help me plan and co-facilitate conversations around this”. Can we talk about this?”

Ø So, what have you been up to? Time is set aside to catch up with the stories of facilitation. Members who asked for help at previous meeting and those who worked together between meetings come with stories to tell. A visitor would be heartened by the honesty of the storytellers and the thoughtfulness of the listeners. People think together about what worked, what didn’t, and what there is to learn from one another’s experiences. And as one recent visitor commented, “These folks enjoy a good laugh. There’s nothing like laughter to help us find perspective.”

Ø Have you heard the one about…? The Facilitators Forum sometimes offers opportunities for reflecting and responding to a scenario. Here is one scenario that the Facilitators Forum grappled with together:

“The four women who live in this home used to get along just fine. They’ve lived together for three years now and we always thought they liked each other. Now things seem to be tense all the time. Every day one of the women is crying about something. Two staff quit in the past six months, saying that they just can’t deal with these women any more. Can you come help us with this?”

A visitor to the Facilitator’s Forum would hear members consider how to think about this invitation. Members discuss: What do I do next? Who do I talk with? What do I listen and look for? What is my “position” as a facilitator? How do I begin to identify possible themes to explore with the group? How do I help the group explore these themes in ways that move the group’s thinking and action toward a more desirable future for these four women?”

Participants in the Facilitators Forum describe their experiences in these words:

• What draws me to the Facilitators’ Forum is discovering new ways to create patterns with language and process. We’ve learned ways to use patterns and language that insist upon respect and deepen integrity. We’ve learned new patterns that allow different conversations to take place. It stretches the limits of old ways of thinking together. It brings together the two things I care about – the language and the commitment to justice.

• It has been a really supportive group that has made a difference in my confidence and my competence – and those two are certainly linked for me. It has been a really supportive group. Certainly, when we are together as a group, there is a sense of real equality. There’s no right answer to the questions; there are no “trick questions”. This is a process. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

• It’s been about learning to trust the process. I now have faith, a sort of blind faith, that if I am true to myself and true to the process, it will work out. This faith, and a real respect for the people in the room – this is what I now pay attention to as a facilitator.

• The experience of the Facilitators Forum feels like a spiral to me. I am learning to trust myself, I have a safe place to try out new stuff and a wider community of people who see me as an increasingly competent facilitator. This leads to more invitations to co-facilitate.

• And this, in turn, builds my confidence and my willingness to try new things.

Telling stories, connecting, supporting, laughing, finding new patterns for listening and inquiring, and always reflecting…these are some of the many dynamics at play in Rhode Island’s quiet revolution. Questions, comments, or information, contact Doreen McConaghy at PAL@ids.net or Maya Frye Colantuono at Mayafryeco@aol.com.

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Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg

Wayne Helgason, etc.

The Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg (ACWI) is a magnificent building with a fascinating history. The centre currently houses several Aboriginal organizations that provide valuable services to the Aboriginal community of Winnipeg. It was in 1990 that the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg showed its desire to purchase the building. The ACWI represents several service providers, services in areas such as; employment, education, health, justice, printing, publishing, banking, and the arts.

The Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg’s goal is to provide a Centre that will promote the social, educational and entrepreneurial growth for Aboriginal people of Winnipeg. The Rotunda Millennium Restoration Project has made the rotunda a leading venue for community assemblies and events.

The previous owner of the building was of course the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Canadian Pacific Railway began construction of this rail station back in 1904, and hosted its grand opening in May 1905. This building is the fourth rail depot built in its space. The first station was built in 1881. The station served as a temporary station, where one year later it was replaced with a larger more permanent station. Only three years later this station was destroyed by fire, and a replicated station took its place.

The Canadian Pacific Railway Station, now the Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg, in 1993 was designated a structure of national historic and architectural significance by the federal government. Several hundred people use the Centre on a daily basis.

Over the years the CPR station had millions of people through their doors. As Winnipeg was the gateway to the west, several settlers arrived in Manitoba by train. Many settlers passed through the Winnipeg CPR station on their way to the west. Its exciting to think of all the people passing through or stopping in Winnipeg on their way to a new life.

The Aboriginal Centre is a remarkable accomplishment in many contexts. It is a wonderful restatement of Canadian history as the very building that was the hub of western settlement that transformed traditional life styles for Aboriginal peoples, has now resumed it’s role as a hub, this time with Aboriginal people being in the Centre. The act of purchasing the building with a newly created amalgamation of rent paying Aboriginal agencies was a political milestone - and an economic boom. The reconstruction of the Centre has been a two tier training project with young Aboriginal learning new trades in the process, and the building becoming a centerpiece of functional business, training and growth.

Today, virtually any Aboriginal activity in Manitoba - certainly in Winnipeg is part of a community process that cycles through the Center.

In the same vein, the rebuilding of the original core area of the city has been sparked by the creation of the Aboriginal Centre. A dramatic statement of this powerful spirit of renewal has been the creation of Niganan - a spectacular circular meeting house immediately in front of the Aboriginal Center. Designed by Douglas Cardinal, the noted Canadian architect who survived the residential school reality, it is a testament to the new future of Aboriginal peoples everywhere - and in particular in Winnipeg.

A winter construction photo and a conceptual diagram by Tim Corey give hints of the stunning reality of the Thunderbird House - with the protective eagle’s wings in the roof shielding the meeting place with the four directions, earth and sky merging a central open fireplace. If you are in Winnipeg, be sure to visit and ask for a tour led by youth Ambassadors.

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Thunderbird House - Niganan

It’s not our diferences that divide us. It’s our judgements about each other that do.

Meg Wheatley

Think outside the Box

Rebecca Beaton

On Sept. 5, 2001, Rebecca Beaton delivered a barn stormer keynote address to the annual state-wide self advocacy conference in RI. She rolled out encased in a huge cardboard box, from which she emerged and gave the following address. They went wild.

HI EVERYONE!

You might be wondering why I came in wearing a BOX. It's simple – really – I just want to show you how to think in new ways about your life – **THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX!!**

This conference is about COMING TOGETHER. So I am going to tell you how lots of people have joined together with me to help me in my life's journey. I also want to share some important lessons that I' ve learned.

LESSON ONE: Believe in yourself!!

People use the word 'normal' a lot. What does that mean?? Just because we have a disability, it doesn't mean we can't be like everyone else. We all have the same hopes and dreams. So believe you are 'normal'!! I always believed I was normal and could do it all!

LESSON TWO: Don't Give up!

When I was three, I went to Meeting Street School. We had great social events there. And I learned how to use the computer. At 14, when I outgrew the academics, I tried to go to my hometown school but, they didn't want me. But did I give up? NO!

When I was 17, I FINALLY went to East Greenwich High School. This turned out better than everyone thought, even the teachers were surprised. The work was very hard, but I did it!

LESSON THREE: Make Friends and Be a Good Friend to others!

In school I was surrounded by kids who had disabilities and others who didn't have disabilities. They were ALL my peers and they accepted me. We didn't care about anyone's 'limitations'. We were friends!

I had many friends and was involved in all activities like clubs and dances. I had a really good time and I even made the honor roll.

LESSON FOUR: Hold on to Your Dreams!!

In 1993, I went to College at CCRI. It was a dream come true, but it was also a challenge! It was difficult but I did it. Janice Rodrigues, my terrific friend, helped me every day. And I graduated in 1996! Janice learned a lot too, ha ha.

LESSON FIVE: Keep Dreaming and Going for Your Goals!!

After college came West Bay. I am in a day program that includes all sorts of real fun and social activities, INCLUDING a job on the computer. The computer has been my life line to the world.

Right now I live with my parents. They have always been there for me and I love them! Thank you for EVERYTHING mom and Dad!

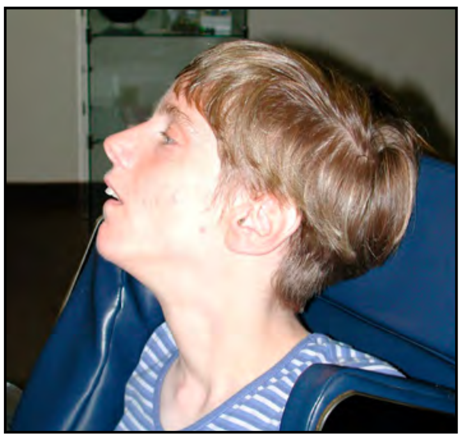
While I love living with my parents, I am also making plans to move into my own apartment one day. I know I will need a lot of support to do this. I'm working with West Bay, my family and friends to figure it all out. It will take time, but I am going for it!

LESSON SIX: Connect with Others Who Dream and Speak Up Together!!

Today I am a member of a great self-advocacy group called Advocates Connecting. I'm also on the Advocates in Action board of Directors.

I am really learning to spread my wings. I've been able to travel to places like Arizona and Vermont. I've done some public speaking and taught others how to speak up. It feels GREAT!

In closing I just want to say how much I really love being out here in the 'normal' world. I am doing things that everyone thought would be impossible for me just a few years ago! I couldn't have done ANY of it alone!



Remember to think normal because you are! Work hard, don't give up and enjoy life! We are ALL in it together!!

George Bernard Shaw

from Man and Superman, Dedicatory letter

This is the true joy in life,
the being, used for a purpose
recognized by
yourself as a mighty one;
the being a force of nature
instead of a feverish,
selfish little clod of
ailments and grievances
complaining that the world
will not devote itself
to making you happy.

I am of the opinion that my life
belongs to the
whole community
and as long as I live
it is my privilege to do for it
whatever I can.

I want to be thoroughly used up
when I die,
for the harder I work
the more I live.
I rejoice in life for its own sake.
Life is no "brief candle" to me.
It is a sort of splendid torch
which I have got
hold of for the moment,
and I want to make it
burn as brightly as possible before
handing it on
to future generations.

Teens PATH Each Other in Iqaluit, Nunavut

Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint & Charlotte Borg

On a recent trip to Nunavut, Canada's newest territory and a unique experiment in aboriginal self government in the world, we were delighted to learn that PATH is being used extensively in school systems throughout the territory. Nunavut covers 1/3 the land mass of Canada - making it over half the area of continental United States. 27,000 people inhabit 40 villages.

PATH is being used in team planning, organizational planning for schools, and individualized student planning. But the most exciting experiment was in Charlotte Borg's Grade 6 classroom in Iqaluit. Starting last fall, the students (aged 11-13) were introduced to the PATH process to assist some of the children. However, "having your PATH done" was so popular, that all the students wanted one. Charlotte agreed, and in short order had modified her work load - and increased productivity by having the children choose their facilitator and two recorders. One recorded the PATH on the big chart on the wall, while the second worked on an 11 X 17 reduced copy - which was in turn mounted on top of each student's desk.

Charlotte explained that at the beginning an outside facilitator did the PATHs, then the kids asked if they could facilitate. They had a class meeting and decided that the Pathfinder could choose their facilitator and two recorders. Thus, the children took over all the roles. Charlotte reported that the results were much better: the attention better, more kids spoke up. I (Charlotte) simply sat unobtrusively at the back and passed a kush ball which we used as a talking stick."

I was really concerned because one girl was really shy. But one of her friends asked her to facilitate their PATH. She was brilliant. The kids had all the terminology down - and even mimicked the facilitator's movements. I had to struggle not to laugh every time one of them said: "Moving right along.." and "Who will support this person to..."

One of the results was that the kids talked a lot more when the kids did the facilitating. They used a timer for every step. We planned so much time for each step, thus they always stayed to the timeline, and every single student got their PATH done.. in the first month of the school year.

We started last year because we wanted to find a way for ALL the kids to buy into helping each other. Seven of my 28 children had labels (mostly behaviour labels), and we knew that if we didn't do something quickly, they would not be included. We decided to use MAPS and PATH. When we started, the Program Support Teacher came in once a week - to do PATHS for the kids with 'labels'. Then, we copied the PATH from the big sheet - to smaller sheets which were shared with the parents later on. With the facilitator coming in, I as the classroom teacher, was part of the team rather than being the facilitator.

One of our first innovations was that we adapted the format and did the big and small PATH simultaneously. We used the kids. They loved it. And that led to the children pushing us to have a PATH for everyone - and asking why they couldn't facilitate and record the PATHs. We didn't have a good reason why not, so we did it -and it worked wonders.

What did kids say in their PATHs?

The key is always in the Dream, and kids loved 'dreaming'. They had a wide spectrum of dreams including: leader, teacher, juggling the world, family, grown up, peaceful, children happy.

Their Goals for a Year from now were much crisper: A's in high school, doing homework, not being sent home, behaving well in class.

The Now - needs to do homework, needs to work in class, needs to speak more softly, needs to call someone when not feeling safe.

Enroll - Kids enrolled each other I will help you with math; I will help you to draw; there were always many volunteers.

Stronger: Kids took personal responsibility for things - like when I'm not focusing I can do my exercises; I could go get a divider to avoid being distracted. They invented their own strategies, and the whole CLASS knew their strategies, so they helped and supported each other.

First Steps: Each child identified Two things they could do right away. Some examples: join the Homework Club; stay for homework immediately; begin exercises tomorrow.

EVERYONE got steps - no exceptions.

We asked the kids to pick the two things on each step that were most important to them. We highlighted them. Many of them were linked to their transition to high school.

The results of the students doing these PATHs with and for each other were very dramatic. The students decided to paste their mini-paths on their desks - and later to **make them part** of their report cards. And all year long, I could see kids point to their paths as they were working. More dramatic, when a child was struggling, other kids gently coached by pointing to a helpful point on that child's path. What happened was that the class took ownership of class - ownership of each other. We noticed that several troublesome behaviors diminished. Name calling and teasing dropped off.

With the help of the class, we also did a PATH for our whole class, to help us decide where we wanted to go on a number of issues.

For our class, we learned a lot. I had a great teaching year because PATH helped the students to create a climate where they understood each other's needs and were willing to help. I had the privilege of stepping back - allowing them to learn and thus being a better teacher. I didn't have to do 'behaviour management' because the kids supported each other. I was a better teacher for the experience - and I am sure that these kids would tell you they loved doing their PATHs. That was why they insisted that their PATHs be part of their report cards. It was Their plan for their education and they were proud of their plan and their accomplishments.

Sometimes you find the neatest dragonfly when you are looking for tadpoles.

Wearing a halo can give you a headache after a while.

Gerv Leyden running a marathon

Educational Psychologists: Barriers or Allies for Inclusion?

View from the UK.

Gerv Leyden, Derek Wilson Colin Newton

We write this as three UK educational psychologists (eps) with strong beliefs and solid practice on our role in promoting inclusion. And we are not alone in this. Now this may seem odd to those parents of high need children who have found eps an obstacle to be overcome in their fight for mainstream education, so let's stop and review the picture.

How did the link between eps and special school placements originate? A century or so ago the needs of adults who could not care for themselves independently were assessed by medical officers on the basis of a personal interview. If the adult 'failed' the interview he or she was then 'certified' as 'mentally handicapped' and transferred to a special, segregated hospital or unit. One of the official forms in use in the UK for this purpose required the interviewee to describe the difference between a 'kipper, a herring and a bloater' (any offers?). Curious business, assessment.

Psychometric tests were developed by psychologists in the early days of the 20th Century to replace such idiosyncratic practice and move towards a more a 'scientific' approach to assessment. Hence the introduction of 'IQ' scores to try and quantify the individual differences between people in a more objective fashion. Such tests scores rapidly replaced 'personal interviews' as the criteria for specialised placement in health and educational settings.

Thus arose the professional link between eps and the practice of IQ testing as the basis for assignment to special educational placements. In fact the tests were wrongly targeted. The legitimate area for assessment was not the individual person, but the effectiveness of the placements themselves and the consequences for the person of being placed there. A greater misuse of tests was their application by medical officers and eps for the purpose of excluding some children from any schooling at all, and transferring them out of the education system completely.

In simple human terms, the actual process of this decontextualised approach to assessment of children was and is deeply flawed. Think about it. A stranger interviews your child, *plucked* from the classroom, *isolated* from his/her friends, in a *formal* office, asks *bizarre* questions, uses *unfamiliar* and largely *non-educational* materials and generally does not take the trouble gain your child's *informed consent*. And the purpose of this exercise? To advise on her/his *educational* programme or school placement. Does this make any sense?

The criticisms of the subsequent use and abuse of IQ tests in education have been well rehearsed by parents, many eps, teachers and others, particularly during the last 25 years. Such tests do not tell us anything we need to know about planning individual educational programmes for our children, and their use in depriving children of their rights and entitlements to a full education with their peers cannot be justified.

Well, times and practices are changing. In addition to the growing reaction by eps to the mindless use of psychometry, the earlier claims that segregated provision provides educational benefits for children have been challenged and found wanting. For these and other reasons ep services have undergone radical review as psychologists revisit and revise the core values – child focused values - underpinning their practice. An emphasis on inclusion and inclusive practice now characterises most – though not yet all – ep services in the UK. In achieving this eps have taken account of what they have learned from parents, and parent groups in the UK such as the *Alliance for Inclusive Education*.

In the past there has been scant support from eps for parents seeking mainstream places for their high need child, but allies are now emerging from a newer wave of psychological services who have become less of the 'handbrake' and more of the 'engine' of the drive towards inclusion.

In the UK, our ep services in Nottingham city and county, have been among the leaders on this journey, and found their own allies among parents, teachers and the local university. As an example of the latter, inclusive education is one of the defining values of the professional training course for eps which features; seminars on disability awareness and models of support, workshops and research projects on person-centred planning tools and strategies (including 'Circles of Friends', MAPs and PATH.)

Eps from local services and the university have successfully collaborated on using PATH not only for creative transition planning meetings with parents, family, friends and teachers of hi need *pupils*, but also for working with the whole *staff* of schools to help plan their way forward towards more positive futures.

And while we still meet the doubters, we know beyond doubt that full inclusion is *achievable*. The fully inclusive school system in Hamilton, Ontario (H.W.R.C.S.S.B) is but one example that tells us so, and developments in Newham LEA, here in the UK, confirm it. And they also remind us there is no one template to follow – it is up to us all to learn how to design our own system to fit our own circumstances. Together we can bring about that change.

A lesson for everybody. While in the past the role of eps was to 'legitimise' the transfer of pupils into segregated settings, times have changed. The *British Psychological Society* and the *Association of Educational Psychologists* – the two major bodies representing eps in the UK - have both signed up in support of the CSIE 'Charter for Inclusive Education'. There is no going back. And the educational psychologist is no longer a '*two percent'* ep, applying '*two percent'* of his/her psychological knowledge to '*two percent'* of the pupil population, for '*98 percent'* of our time.

We all need allies to create and sustain change. Eps, parents, teachers. Working collaboratively can only be a win-win situation for us all. A quotation from a teacher poster in a Junior High school in Stoney Creek, Hamilton classroom spells it out:

'None of us is as smart as all of us'.

Colin Newtin as EP and a kid

Derek Wilson as EP - also as a kid

'Ask the Kids!'

Gerv Leyden, Colin Newton, Derek Wilson

Parents of children who need additional support in school generally feel vulnerable themselves. They often tell us that they are especially 'tuned in' to the phone on school days. Anxious that a call will come through telling of difficulties in class. Or, more seriously, that their child's classroom aid is not able to come in today, and 'would you be able to come and support' otherwise your child will have to be sent home.

Yet there are alternatives, and the ones that have most interested – and inspired – us have been cases in which the pupils themselves have provided the solution.

Alex is eight years old, and attends a mainstream Junior school. He has a significant hearing loss and communicates with others through sign language. His classroom aid, Julie, supports him in his lessons. She also teaches signing to the whole class so that they can communicate with Alex in the classroom and at break-times. The first 20 minutes of the afternoon session each day are spent with the whole class, introducing new vocabulary and refreshing signing skills.

When Carole, the class-teacher, makes a presentation to the whole class, Julie stands at the front alongside her and signs. Julie's presence is therefore vital for Alex to take part in his class lessons.

The day Julie received a call that her own child had suddenly been taken ill at school, and she would have to go and take her home presented an immediate and urgent problem for Alex and his teachers. How could they include Alex in his class lessons?

But then something remarkable happened to solve the problem. As Julie left the classroom, Katie, a nine year old girl sitting at the back of the class walked unasked to the front of the room, stood alongside Carole, gazed briefly at her, then faced the class and started to sign. And the lesson continued. As normal.

There are many lessons to be learned from that event. But for us, it is a reminder that the clue to solving many of our apparent 'problems' is to be found in the children themselves. If we give them the opportunity to show us.

A very different situation occurred in a secondary comprehensive school. On this occasion it involved Matthew, a 15 year old boy who had contracted leukemia, and would be facing regular and frequent spells of chemotherapy throughout the year which would require his admission to hospital for several days at a time.

Matthew was an enthusiastic student who had set his heart on doing well in his end of year exams, and then moving on to a college course to that would enable him to apply for a university place. Although his school would continue to prepare work for him, Matthew knew that the hospital stays would interfere with his studies, and his social contacts with his friends who were an important part of his life.

How could we meet his social and study needs? One possibility would be to involve hospital based teachers or the home teaching service. But neither would necessarily know the specific course and programme Matthew was to follow. Nor would they be a substitute for the 'crack' and humour of his teenage friends and course mates. We discussed this with Mathew, sounded out the options, and jointly came up with this strategy.

While it may seem obvious to you, we were astonished how simple and effective was the solution. During a meeting with his tutor group in school we outlined the concept of a 'circle of support.' And, not surprisingly, they ALL opted to be part! and worked out their own a rotation to ensure that four or five (often more!) would be gathered round his bed in the ward everyday, to discuss whatever. Who was dating whom, which teachers were the focus of gossip, which CDs were hot that week …… and subject work. They transformed a hospital ward into a school common room/recess area and study base, much to the initial shock and eventual delight of the medical staff.

Towards the end of the year, we held a follow-up meeting with the support circle, and asked them about their experience. All were highly enthusiastic – as was Matthew – but one student summed it up on behalf of all. 'Thank you. It was a privilege to be asked.'

From our perspective, it was a privilege to meet such enthusiastic young people. And a privilege to be in the position of asking them to help.

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The function of education therefore,
is to teach one to think intensively
and to think critically.
But education which stops with
efficiency may prove the greatest
menace to society. The most
dangerous criminal may be the man
gifted with reason but with no
morals. We must remember that
intelligence is not enough.

Intelligence plus character - that
is the goal of true education. the
complete education gives one not
only the power of concentration
but worthy objectives
upon which to concentrate.

Martin Luther King Jr.

We can't be creative if we refuse to be confused. Change always starts with confusion; chersihed interpretaions must dissolve to make way for the new.

Margaret Wheatley:

Dream Catcher Door

Harry Mathews

I wandered the corridors of ignorance
seemingly confined to roam endlessly.
Each person I met the same
until one read a poem.
And to our surprise a door
appeared and opened.

For the purpose of poetry
is to open the door that
is not there
and so bring magic to
those who are confined.

The School We'd Like

From the Guardian newspaper with permission. © The Guardian

*Children's voices have not been heard during this election campaign - until now. Some 15,000 of them entered our competition, **The School I'd Like**, demanding radical change. Dea Birkett unveils the children's manifesto.*

Dea Birkett, The Guardian

Tuesday June 5, 2001

A school in a giant submarine with waterproof maps of the underwater world. Private helicopters to fly children to France for their French lessons. Voice-activated pencils. Rocket launch pads to take pupils on trips to distant planets to study the solar system. Canteen robots instead of dinner ladies. Clean toilets, swimming pools, a jug of water in every classroom, enough computers and books to go round, fast food school dinners, comfortable uniforms, flexible timetables, chill-out rooms and quieter school bells. School children throughout Britain - primary and secondary - have outlined their plans for the perfect school.

The School I'd Like competition has unleashed the most imaginative, stimulating and provocative challenges to our educational system. And those challenges have come entirely from children. Entrusted with designing their own schools, where they spend an average working week, they have grasped the opportunity. They want change.

In the heady idealism of 1967, when our sister paper the Observer ran a competition asking children to design the school of their dreams, there were almost 1,000 entries. Over 30 years later, when we ran the second School I'd Like, we were cautious in predicting the number of entrants. The pressures of the national curriculum must surely mean that teachers and pupils would have less free time to work on projects, to plan for the seemingly impossible.

We were proved wrong. Some 15,000 children dreamed up their ideal school. Hannah Watson's Timbuctoo primary, Catherine Butler's cyber school, Jessica Jameson's utopia secondary, Aleksi Hastings' super skool, and home-educated Drew Bentley's Year 2150AD fantasy school were among the entries that revealed the hope that school time could be fruitful and fun. Most of all, at these ideal educational establishments, every child was eager to attend. It wasn't so much that they despised their schools (although some did). It was what Edward Blishen, who wrote a book on the 1967 competition, had found amongst the entries then. There was a "lack of positive happiness" amongst the children. "And schools, they say, ought to be happy places."

Primary school pupil Sarah Noyce, who designed a school in the shape of a flower, sums up why all the entrants wished their dream school would come true: "So if I had a choice of going to school or staying at home I'd definitely choose to go to school. And I hope if it was really made it would encourage more children to want to come to school."

Entries were encouraged in any form - videos, papier mache models, epic poems, plays, dictated comments, drawings, architectural plans, photographic collages and Braille essays arrived. The winning entry from year 4 at Christ Church CE Primary School consisted of a huge model of a conservatory-like school, a video of each child debating their ideas, and a scrapbook. Primary school entries were the most radical. (The 1967 competition was only open to secondary school children.) Unfettered by concerns about getting a "good education" and school budgets, the young children asked for the fantastical - maths classes in a swimming pool, a naughty children robot to escort bad children on a travelator to the headteacher, fountains that spouted Fanta. Lower secondary students were often preoccupied with safety, wanting security systems and even CCTV fitted. By upper secondary, the plans were becoming more vast and detailed - whole prospectuses for their imaginary schools, often including a staff list and application form.

There were the philosophers, such as the pupil from Ilford County High School: *"Education should not close children's eyes to the wonder of learning as it presently does, but should give children the opportunity to feed their mind and never get tired of life before theirs has even begun."* But even the high thinkers with the most whimsical designs had a practical edge. It seems that, trusted with the responsibility of redesigning their education, children are ready to meet the challenge. Blishen had found the same so-called adult heads on children's shoulders amongst the entrants. "Juvenile irresponsibility was awfully hard to find. The radical note that was so pervasive was astonishingly steady, reasonable, and supported by instances. I have never read so much that was so full of complaints and criticisms, of schemes for imaginative innovation, and yet that was, as a whole, so very sober."

Many of the children plotted their dreams under the guidance of a teacher who took on **The School I'd Like** as a class project. In 1967, this led to a mixed post bag. "A few schools seem able to set their children free, intellectually, while others, having children of the same calibre and capacity, shut them up in the prison of a most dreadful conformity, so that you want to turn some sort of key and release them into the world of honest childhood," wrote Blishen. In the 2001 competition, in all but a few entries teachers displayed just as much passion and imagination as those they taught, themselves designing a myriad of methods to encourage group entries. "Moany teachers" came in for much criticism, with hopes that they might be replaced by robots or telly teachers. But the fact that so many encouraged their class to enter suggests that they, too, feel frustrated by the status quo.

Even in the teacher-inspired entries, the judges were looking for an authentic, unfiltered child's voice. By and large that is what they found. They were impressed by the year 2 at Beeches Infant School's dream school rap *("Dream dream school, dream dream school/ Had a dream that's really cool!/School can be a load of fun/Dreamed of things that can be done.")*, submitted as a cassette and illustrated book. It was a joint effort where, nevertheless, each individual child's contribution could be clearly heard.

Being heard was at the heart of every entry. This is the one plea that also united the 1967 entries. Edward Blishen wrote, *"From all the quarters of the educational scene it comes, this expression of children's longing to take upon themselves some of the burden of deciding what should be learned, how it should be learned."* Sadly, it is also the one plea that has largely been ignored.

No one proposed no school, although many did suggest less school. (Jonathan Adams wanted to *"have a free three days a month development leave where one can take time off school for just being an adolescent. Not having to explain!"*) But the vast majority just wanted a better school. They wanted to be educated, not indoctrinated. Their argument for accepting and implementing their schemes was convincing: as 13-year-old Andrew Cole said: "In the end, the children would learn because they would want to learn."

Thankfully, there were those who challenged the consensus. A few wanted more homework, more discipline, older teachers (although never above 49) and a strict division between the sexes. Stephanie Limb's make-over school for girls had a uniform of pink halter neck top and a purple and gold skirt. A free lipstick was offered with each school meal. A handful wanted harsher punishments for those who misbehave. *"Bullying can be stopped by teachers putting bullies in detention and using a cane,"* said nine-year-old Amy Wakenshaw. But the romance of the brutal boarding school, which Blishen had noted as a minority interest, had long gone. Where do we go from here? A conference? A second book? An exhibition of the entries? Most of all, now these voices have been heard we hope the answer will not lead to another three decades of silence. Thirty four years after the first **School I'd Like**, very few of the suggestions put forward have been acted on. Then, the mandate was just under 1,000 children's voices. Now it is over 15,000. "The incredibly huge response to the competition shows that teachers and pupils all over the country realize that the system is outdated, that it does not allow decent expression of the values of creativity and independent thought that are needed in the new post-industrial world," said John Clifford, a winner in the original 1967 competition, who now teaches drama at Queen Margaret University College and is a competition judge.

"It proves yet again that young people are not a problem that needs to be corralled and curfewed, but an incredible rich resource of wisdom and creative thinking that we should learn to listen to." This was the most prominent and powerful message throughout the entries. Lower secondary school pupil Aleksi Hastings had his entry set as a task by his teacher. It began: *"Hi, this is a homework that will probably just be written, read and returned, with a mark and some red pen all over it. Yet, I will write this thing anyway." It ended: "Please don't just push this aside as another homework, treat this piece presented before you as an academic breakthrough. Goodbye - and make the dream come true."*

I have a Dream

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character. I have a dream today.

Martin Luther King Jr.. 1929-1968

The Children's Manifesto

We, the schoolchildren of Britain, have been given a voice. This is what we say:

The school we'd like is:

- A beautiful school with glass dome roofs to let in the light, uncluttered classrooms and brightly coloured walls.
- A comfortable school with sofas and beanbags, cushions on the floors, tables that don't scrape our knees, blinds that keep out the sun, and quiet rooms where we can chill out.
- A safe school with swipe cards for the school gate, anti-bully alarms, first aid classes, and someone to talk to about our problems.
- A listening school with children on the governing body, class representatives and the chance to vote for the teachers.
- A flexible school without rigid timetables or exams, without compulsory homework, without a one-size-fits-all curriculum, so we can follow our own interests and spend more time on what we enjoy.
- A relevant school where we learn through experience, experiments and exploration, with trips to historic sites and teachers who have practical experience of what they teach.
- A respectful school where we are not treated as empty vessels to be filled with information, where teachers treat us as individuals, where children and adults can talk freely to each other, and our opinion matters.
- A school without walls so we can go outside to learn, with animals to look after and wild gardens to explore.
- A school for everybody with boys and girls from all backgrounds and abilities, with no grading, so we don't compete against each other, but just do our best.

At the school we'd like, we'd have:

- Enough pencils and books for each child.
- Laptops so we could continue our work outside and at home.
- Drinking water in every classroom, and fountains of soft drinks in the playground.
- School uniforms of trainers, baseball caps and fleece tracksuits for boys and girls.
- Clean toilets that lock, with paper and soap, and flushes not chains.
- Fast-food school dinners and no dinner ladies.
- Large lockers to store our things.
- A swimming pool.

This is what we'd like. It is not an impossible dream.

'I know money doesn't grow on trees and if every school had all these things it would cost thousands of thousands of pounds. But even if one of my ideas was just thought about being made a reality I'd be happy.' Nicole Rennick, 11.

'But most important of all was not the fact that the headmaster had ordered the equipment, but that he had listened.' Holly Mackenzie, 11.

As published in the Guardian newspaper, June 5, 2001 © The Guardian. The Museum of the History of Education at the University of Leeds will keep "The School I'd Like' archive, and everyone can continue to make contributions via their website: http://cfs.bretton.ac.uk/schoolilike.html

It takes courage to be creative; just as soon as you have a new idea you are in a minority of one.
E. Paul Torrance

What if we discover that our present way of life is irreconcilable with our vocation to become fully human?
Paulo Freire

The greatest living contemporary artist is the Creative uninhibited child at play.
Roger Von Oech

Why is it so hard to ask for help?

Micheline Mason

Seeing as most of us like being asked to help, as long as it is a task that we can do, why can't we imagine other people feeling the same about our little pleas for assistance. I know I don't. I also know that having built myself up to ask someone to do something for me, I hate them saying "no", however reasonable their reasons are, including "I'm ill", "I'll be away in New Zealand", "I'll be at work", etc. Recently I've noticed my daughter feeling the same way. "Will you ring my friend and ask them to come shopping on Saturday?" she will ask. "Why me?" I ask. "Because they might say no, and I don't want to hear it".

In his book '*Crossing the River*', David Schwarz* says "most disabled people and their families start out naturally 'reaching out' for help, assistance and reassurance. The rejection with which this 'asking' is frequently greeted is often so repeatedly disheartening they stop asking altogether". Inclusion is a process which refuses to accept this "sub-ground dwelling which seems their lot", and, in so doing requires people to ask for assistance, or collaboration from others. The new realization however, is that the 'asker' does not have to be the parent, the child, or a disabled person, but an ally - an ally whose "deepest ethical responsibility is to absorb any new rejection on behalf of the disabled person".

I want to share with you an example of allies asking' for me, in this case Mandy Neville and my Circle of Support. I have a wonderful circle of support, but most of them do not live very near me, and are not easily available to help me with practical tasks, or emergencies. We decided that I needed a group of people who could get to our house in minutes, so together we wrote this letter:

Dear Neighbour

My name is Micheline and my daughter's name is Lucy. You probably know us, we are both wheelchair users and own the big yellow van outside number 34, where we live.

We have been too shy to ask but we could both do with a little more help in our lives, the sort of help that our neighbours who care for each other may be willing to give. I think I should say, we live on our own and we do have a few hours a week of paid help. Of course, this does not always cover everything we need to get done.

A friend suggested that as we live in a street full of people, there may actually be a few people who would like to get to know us in this way.

What we have done is to list a few examples of the different tasks we cannot do ourselves. We have included a reply slip for you to fill in if you are willing to be contacted. If you do not want to or do not have time to be involved please continue to wave, smile or chat to us in the street, and maybe have a get together. If you do reply I will give you a ring in the next couple of weeks.

List of Jobs

Vehicle: *About once a month I need to have my van cleaned. I also need to have someone check the tire pressure and water levels regularly.*

Home repair and maintenance: *I have a cupboard door that needs mending. There are two plates which need to go up on the wall. Sometimes our wheelchairs need a little attention like the tires pumping up.*

Gardening Tasks: *The trellis needs screwing back on. Occasional tidying up jobs like burning the rubbish or clipping back a hedge, etc. My pond needs to be emptied and re-started.*

Shopping: *Sometimes I need help with shopping for heavy things like bags of compost.*

Odd - jobs: *Help with laying a small carpet oddment in the bathroom. The toilet seat needs screwing on properly. We need someone who is not scared of spiders who we can ring to rescue us! We are desperate for a really tidy and organized person to tackle some of our cupboards and shelves. The airing cupboard needs hooks and shelves to make it more efficient. We need a ruthless person who can chuck out clutter to come and help sometime.*

Particular jobs: *Someone who could help with the asking (it is really hard to ask for ourselves).*

Lots of these tasks we only need help with now and again in a time that suits us both. Some tasks require more urgent attention such as help with a flat tire on the wheelchair and we would like to have one or two people we could call on as the need arises. Strong people who could lift Lucy on certain occasions when we are stuck, i.e. to get her into a cab. People who would be happy to sit with Lucy if I am held up and cannot get home.

Micheline and Lucy

Mandy designed and photocopied lots of copies and my 'askers' posted them in about 40 doors in my street. Six people replied and between them most of the things I asked for were covered by someone. One is a carpenter and handyman, one is a nurse working with homeless people, one is my upstairs neighbour from Somalia who wrote demanding to be the first person asked as she is my nearest neighbour! I now have a list of names and phone numbers by the phone. I still find it difficult to use the list, but I have now asked most people to do at least one thing. When I was in hospital for four days, one neighbour became part of Lucy's care-team. Another has put together a 'flat-pack' cupboard for me. They all seem delighted to be of 'use'. We are a long way from Shafik Asante's 'village' where we all get together and pour our hearts out over a sponge cake, but this is London, not Philadelphia. It is a great start.

E-Mail: ALLFIE@btinternet.com

**Crossing the River - creating a Conceptual Revolution In Community and Disability* by David B Schwarz, Brookline Books 1992.

All change, even very large
and powerful change, begins when
a few people start talking
with one another about
something they care about.

Meg Wheatley, Turning to one another

IN: DIFFERENCE: AFTER WORD

Dave Hingsburger, Diverse City Press

Mike, Astra and I began to work together to put on the short play "Blue Gene Baby" in celebration of the life of Marsha Forest. From the moment when Hart House erupted, we knew that, together, we had something magical. Since then we have worked on a series of projects.

All of us have grown because of the work we have done together. We challenge, and encourage, each other. Recently, Mike was directing Astra in a scene that required many takes and long delays. Finally the camera rolled and Astra, playing the part of an institutionalized woman, shuffles down a hallway. She was brilliant. Mike applauded her performance. Later, Mike was playing an inmate of an asylum, he lay on a cold floor, trussed up in a straight jacket. Astra came to offer her moral support. When the scene was shot, Astra applauded Mike's performance.

I felt, right then, that Marsha was there. Ms. Inclusion, herself, smiling and applauding. She lived so that others would have lives.

May we all live, like Marsha, for others. For a belief in the oneness of humanity. For the day when diversity isn't tolerated, it's celebrated.

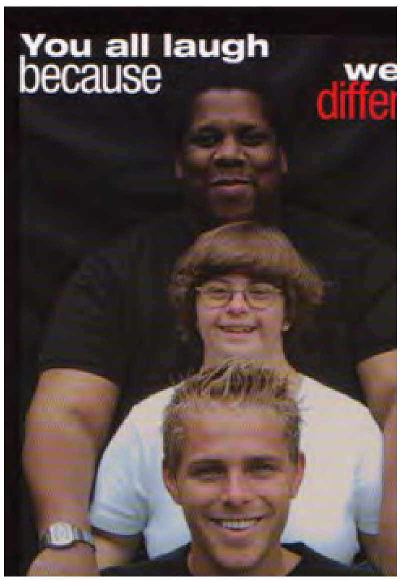
Marsha, in an odd way, you brought this troop together. Others said that your idea of a diversity of people working together was mad. Well, they're right, because we're together and we're quite MAD.

M*ichael, Astra, Dave.*

This is an excerpt from another wonderful book by Dave Hingsburger: **In: Difference**. This describes the origins of the "Blue Gene Baby" commercials which you must get from Dave. For information: http://inclusion.com/N-Whats.New.http

Pride Against Prejudice: Disability Awareness Campaign

Disability pride is a new concept. Like other minorities people with physical and developmental disabilities are speaking about the pride they feel within their community.



Astra Milberg, a woman with Down Syndrome and one of the stars of the 8 week public service advertisement campaign believes that people with developmental disabilities need to become more visible. "People need to see what we can do. For years people shoved us away, put us in institutions, now we are here in the community. We want people to know what we can do."

The ad campaign begins with "Blue Gene Baby, a 30 second television spot that asks the viewer to consider how they value someone with a disability. Two other spots deal with blatant prejudice and with institutionalization.

Michael Soucie, a young actor from Toronto, stars in and directs some of the public service announcements. "It was a privilege to be involved in the project. As both and actor and director, I was personally challenged to think about sexism, racism, homophobia and to understand that 'ableism' is just as serious an issue. I hope that when people see these commercials, they will make the same kind of connections that I did."

Funds were raised to film these commercials by the Disability Pride and Awareness Committee, housed at the Essex County Association for Community Living, and now other organizations are being asked to contribute money to purchase air time.

The writer, and inspiration for this campaign, Dave Hingsburger is a well known disability rights spokesperson. "I saw it as important that we address some of the very real prejudice that people with developmental disabilities experience. From my work with self advocates who have disabilities, I know that the disability community is beginning to coalesce around and speak to issues of both pride and prejudice. There is a growing sense of real pride in the accomplishments of that community. This campaign will demonstrate pride and confront prejudice."

Purpose of Disability Pride Campaign

Visibility and voice. Astra Milberg, one of the stars of this series of public service announcements said that she felt that it was important for people with disabilities to speak up, to be seen and heard. The purpose behind these television spots is to directly challenge the viewer to think about people with disabilities in new ways. These 'spots' confront attitudes about value, about worth and about freedom. Historically people with disabilities have been shunted aside, moved out of the mainstream. Though today people with disabilities grow up in their own homes, they are often still not welcomed into the everyday social fabric of our society.

The disability pride movement wants to present people with disabilities as full citizens. These 'spots' do not ask for 'pity' or 'pennies,' they ask for respect. Using bold images and strong words, these public service announcements both uplift and challenge. The committee of people behind this campaign wanted to engender new attitudes and to encourage new questions about people with disabilities. In Astra we have a role model of pride and conviction. She is one of thousands of people with disabilities whose very lives give the lie to attitudes that devalue.

Donations are tax deductable and need to be made out to: Essex County Association for Community Living - PSA fund (it is vital that PSA fund be written directly on the cheque) 372 Talbot Street North Essex, ON Canada N8M 2W4

Call: Dave Hingsburger at 705-424-7181

The Dignity of Risk

What if you never got to make a mistake?
What if your money was always kept in an envelope where you couldn't get it?
What if you were always treated like a child?
What if your only chance to be with people different from you was with your own family?
What if the job you did was not useful.
What if you never got to make a decision?
What if the only risky thing you could do was then described as 'challenging'
What if you couldn't go outside because the last time you went it rained.
What if you took the wrong bus once and now you can't take another one.
What if you got into trouble and were sent away and you couldn't come back because they always remember your 'trouble'
What if you worked and got paid £2 a week.
What if you had no privacy.
What if you could do part of the grocery shopping but weren't allowed to do any because you weren't able to do all of the shopping.
What if you spent three hours a day just waiting?
What if you grew old and never knew adulthood.
What if you never got a chance?

From: Changing Expectations: Dorothy

How do I Know I am Living in a Community?

Ted Kuntz - PLAN

Community is more than simply living near other people. Community requires some kind of interaction with the people we live near. This became abundantly clear when the community living movement closed institutions like Woodlands and Tranquille and moved its residents into homes in the community. What we discovered is that living in a community is not the same as being a part of a community. Many individuals today who live in a group home are no more a part of the community than they were when living in an institution.

So what it is that makes a community a community? After some thought and discussion I came up with these answers. I know I am living in a community when.

1. Everything is personal; people know me by name.
2. I am valued; it is recognized that I have gifts to offer to the community.
3. There are opportunities for my gifts to be given.
4. There is informality in proceedings; an order exists but is not rigid and allows for my uniqueness.
5. There is creativity and spontaneity; there are opportunities for singing, celebration, and eating together.
6. There is tragedy and it is acknowledged that tragedy is a part of life.

E-mail: tjkuntz@axion.net

Choice

Ernie Panscofar

Somebody asked me, "What do you choose?"
How can I answer? Will I win? Will I lose?

"What do you choose?" is loaded with meaning.
Pepsi or Coke or to go out for this evening.

Are you talking about food or a new place to live?
Are you talking of try life or what you will give?

Are you listening to me tell my dreams that I wish
or are you fooling around with new words on a dish

that you offer to me? It sounds very good.
But, it's hard to believe you - I wish that I could.

My dreams for the future are hard to express.
My dreams and my vision are right now a guess.

I need some more options to be in my life.
I need some one near me to hear of my strife.

Choices you offer may not be for me.
And choices I ask for, we all won't agree.

Let's talk about choice and see what it means
As you sit here and listen to each of my dreams.

E-Mail: Natnad@aol.com

Thoughts on the International Access Symbol

Dan Wilkins

As I was getting out of my van in the parking lot of an area store this older woman with white hair pulled into the accessible parking space next to mine. I sat on the lift waiting for her to get out of her car and lock the door. She had a placard on the dash. Suddenly, as she was making sure she had her keys, a man walking by stopped, took one look at me, and addressed her somewhat demonstratively, saying, "You can't park there!!!" He pointed at the sign and then at me. "That space is for people who use wheelchairs...You can't park there." This guy, it seemed, was trying to advocate for ME!

I looked at the woman. She was turning toward him. She was also turning red. I felt I needed to do something. I felt a need to advocate for her; to help this wanna be good samaritan to understand that not all people with disabilities use chairs. I wanted to tell him how important it is to first look for the placard or plate. I never got the chance.

The woman put her keys in her purse, slammed the car door, took one step toward the gentleman and advocated for herself (loudly), "LISTEN, BUCKO!", she said, "I've had two heart attacks and five bypass surgeries in the last three years. I CAN PARK HERE!" I thought to myself "Geez, lady, don't have another one." With a look that dared him to rebut, she walked briskly by the dumbstruck pedestrian and into the store.

I spent about five minutes practically counseling the poor guy. He'd only come to buy nails. He thought he was doing the right thing. I told him about hidden disabilities, of being denied legitimacy as one who's "really disabled" by an exclusionary symbol which does more to perpetuate misconceptions than to empower and unite a culture. He walked away somewhat enlightened but mumbling something to the effect of "Never again..."

Yeah, even though I'm a chair user, I have a problem with the access symbol. It disenfranchises many of my friends who live with disabilities but who do not use chairs. It is a major cause of grief. To an uninformed public, the access symbol by its very design equates disability with wheelchairs and relegates folks like the woman above, those with less obvious disabilities, to always having to prove themselves as worthy of accommodation. The symbol also implies, to those who do not know us that those of us who do use chairs, tend to stay in our chairs, confined or bound to them.

We, as advocates and activists, rally around the symbol because it has been around for a long time, because it is recognized, because it is all that we have. With so few members of our disability culture using wheelchairs: ten percent, maybe less, why do we keep it around? Let's see...90% of 55 million americans (let alone 11% of the rest of the world)...we're talking about 49.5 million people for whom the design is not really representative. So what can we do about it? How do we find a symbol that truly represents the expanse of disability culture. How do we incorporate into a design chair users, cane users, dog users, sign language users, people with hidden disabilities, brain injuries, cognitive and developmental disabilities? How about folks with mental illnesses? The list is long and as individual as there are people living with one.

It seems to me the only way to not alienate anyone is to get away from a design that speaks to a certain disability or body type, like the current access symbol. We may have to abandon any type of of representation of a human form. This is not to be misconstrued as eliminating the "person" or the humanity from disability. I only wish to refocus attention.

Every time I have ever been involved in an access or accommodation dispute the focus has always been on me, or the person with the disability in question. We, folks with disabilities, are always seen as the troublemakers, as "the problem." All we want is an equal shot at what our community has to offer: Access, Accommodation, Equity, Respect, a chance to contribute; to feel and know that we belong. Nothing more. Nothing less. A new symbol, one to be placed on signs in parking lots, on or beside doors to public buildings, restrooms, paths of travel; next to mission statements and on telephones should focus attention on the real barrier to full inclusion: on the attitudes of those controlling the spaces; on those providing the access.

So lets trash the wheelchair symbol, keep the same blue field and throw a big bold capital "A" in the middle. Keep it white for continuity. Why an "A"? A for Accessible. A for Accommodating. A for All. A for Aw heck, you too. The "A" doesn't just focus on architectural access but on attitudinal access. If you, as a store owner, as a city park, as an airline or hotel have it on your door, you've earned it. You've also earned our respect and our business. No small potatoes when you consider the respect and buying power of not only 55 million folks with existing disabilities but the 70 million baby boomers hitting fifty. That's a lot of latent disability. Face it, we get older and, when we do, disability often happens. And let's not forget the 37 million or so AARP members. Laws aside, providing real access and accommodation is the right thing to do but if that's not enough, for no other reason, it makes good business sense.

No confusion. No misrepresentation. No explanation or proof necessary. A symbol we ALL can rally around.

E-mail: wheelchairboy@mail.glasscity.net

100 Years From Now

Lynne Elwell

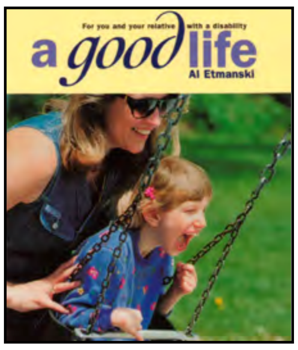
One Hundred years from now,
It will not matter what kind of car I drove,
What kind of house I lived in,
How much was in my bank account,
Nor what my clothes looked like.

But the world
May be a little
Better because
I was important in the life of
A child.

E-mail: lynnee@currantbun.com

If you wait until you are really sure, you will never take off the training wheels.

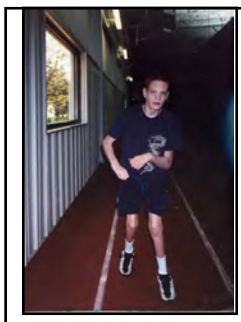
Just because a thing is inconceivable, doesn't mean it's impossible.



Al Etmanski's second book has helped hundreds of family members. If you have questions about the long term future for your children, get the book, talk to Al.
E-mail:
aetmanski@plan.ca

"Read this book and the light bulb goes on in a blaze of clarity. What we want for our sons and daughters doesn't have to depend on the whims of social services and fuding programs; it depends on families regaining control of simple, fundamental questions: what do we want? and what is a good life? This book is joyful. It is also sad, difficult, practical, funny, passionate and profound just like a good life."

Karin Melberg Schwier
Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)
www.plan.ca



Taking Control Of Life: Jeb's Story

Kristin Schard and Patti Scott

During the past year, in several counties in Pennsylvania, people with disabilities and their families have had the opportunity to use independent support brokers in order to help them realize their dreams. With the assistance of their broker, the person, with the help of those closest to them, has been able to assume more control over their own lives and resources, take responsibility for their own decisions and to design the lifestyle of their choice.

One of the first people to take advantage of this opportunity in Delaware County, PA was Jeb Braddock, a young man who lives at home with his mother, Elaine. They had been using traditional services that were not fully meeting their needs. In fact, they were struggling with such simple day to day issues as how to have staff support that was flexible enough to accommodate Elaine's work.

In less than a year, with the help of their broker, Elaine and Jeb developed an individual plan and budget and hired their own staff. They worked creatively, with the people closest to Jeb, to have the things that would make their lives richer and fuller.

Jeb's individualized plan has been in effect for several months now. Kristin Schard, the Director of Neighbours, Inc's Delaware County Association for Support Brokers, recently chatted with Elaine to discuss how control of Jeb's supports has benefited both Jeb and his family.

(KS) If you had to choose again between using the "traditional" system and you and Jeb controlling his resources (i.e. self determination), which would you choose?

(EB) Self determination!

(KS) What were some of the complicating factors of doing things in a non-traditional way?

(EB) Initially, it was very new. We were learning as we went along. One main thing to work through was communication between myself, the support broker, the county case manager and the fiscal agent.

(KS) What are the positive aspects of your decision?

(EB) Flexibility. I can manage working and having a son. Staff working for us are our choice- not anyone else's- and the matches are good and real. Another positive aspect of this for us is that we have control over our day. We know (reasonably well) how our days are going to go. If we succeed or fail, it is up to us.

(KS) Were there any negative aspects of your decision?

(EB) None!

(KS) How has Jeb been affected?

(EB) Jeb is very happy. Staff working with him like him and want to come to work. There is a lot of continuity with goals being followed through on and, therefore, Jeb is making progress. Jeb realizes that his mother has more energy and is getting more quality time with me.

(KS) Going into the process, what were some of your hesitations?

(EB) That because the system was so new, there would be glitches with people getting paid and with having workman's compensation insurance. I was also worried about being pigeonholed by regulations.

(KS) What do you think Jeb might gain from this?

(EB) When money is going directly to Jeb, he is getting more from it - he isn't paying for any overhead. The other part of it is that Jeb is forming real relationships. The people who work with him, know who they are working for and on the other side of it, Jeb is choosing them.

(KS) Where did Jeb's staff come from? Where did you find them?

(EB) Jeb's staff are people who have worked with him in the past and one person is Jeb's sister,

(KS) Any final thoughts that you would like to share?

(EB) Change is hard, but worth it. Sometimes people forget that we are working with people and not with numbers. It is important to "think out of the box".

Patti E-mail: 100117.3112@compuserve.com

if you have no voice - Scream!
If you have no legs - Run!
If you have no hope - Invent!
Marsha Forest

Special Education Isn't Special

Patti McVay

Greg was one of my top students. He could read a few hundred words and loved to be in the limelight, interacting with other high school students whenever we were allowed to have him mainstreamed. He was the leader in our self-contained classroom for students with severe disabilities. He was known throughout the school and was mostly viewed as a mascot, but at least he received some attention and interaction. Many people think that's good enough. He went through the graduation ceremony and there was a standing ovation - great adoration for the 'handicapped' student. But, after high school, there was nothing but waiting lists and time at home.

Eleven years later, I see him starring in a commercial for Goodwill. He was working in their sheltered workshop. It had been awhile since I'd seen him, so I stopped by to say hello. Greg was very stoic and at first I wondered if I'd hit a bad day. Then as we talked, I realized that he was at his institutional best - following his routine and taking direction. He was not able to interact or hold a natural conversation. He was happy to go back to his routine, to his duties. Where is the Greg I knew - so spontaneous and happy? Where is the spark in his eyes? Where is the spirit I used to know?

Brian had a different experience. He went to high school 10 years after Greg and had parents that thought his life might be better if he was treated more like his typical peers. Brian went through school with his non-handicapped peers, learning with and from them. After marching through the graduation ceremony, he too waited for something better, but not much happened. He waited until the county decided he should get out of his house and he too could work in a sheltered work center like Greg. But something different happened - Brian fought back. He said he didn't want to work there. He didn't want to go there - no one talked, joked or had fun. Brian knew he had value and knew that there was more to life because he had spent his life being valued and respected. Greg didn't know his value. Greg didn't have enough experience with being a valued member of his community and so he didn't know what he was giving up, Brian on the other hand, knew who he was and had experience being a valued member of his school and community. Brian knew there was more to life. He's choosing it, he's taking it and people are listening and supporting his choice.

I know that if I allow children to be separated and isolated because of labels, because of IQ scores and tests, I am dooming those who are excluded to a life of isolation, loneliness and rejection. And to those who will not have their presence, I am dooming them to a limited life that is impoverished and without the depth that diversity brings. It truly is no different than racism or sexism or any other bias. Any time we exclude another person because they are different, especially in the name of giving them more or better, we allow ourselves to forget them, thinking they are taken care of and that we need not think of them or consider who they are. Until we create schools where all children are valued and welcome - we won't have schools that are safe. Until we create schools where all children are respected and not held in competition with others, we will not have community.

When we begin to think of schools as places where every child is welcome, then special education becomes a service benefiting all children, rather than a place for some. The elimination of the "special education teacher" label is also critical to changing the perception that only 'specialists' can work with students with disabilities. We are at a crossroads. Standards based education reforms is designed to improve the quality of students' educational outcomes by identifying desired knowledge and competencies and aligning curricula and instruction to achieve this improvement. Critical to effective school reform is measuring whether schools and local educational agencies are making progress toward enabling all students to meet challenging state standards, and holding schools and educational agencies accountable. The inclusion of students with disabilities is mandated under Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act and the IDEA Amendments of 1997. Children with disabilities are like the canaries in the coal mine. As they enter our school systems, they show where the schools are not meeting the needs of all children. When children with disabilities are valued members of our schools, instruction improves, diversity is valued, friendships are developed, families are changed, assessment becomes more valid, student growth rises and so much more.

I will do all I can to create schools where there is no longer a place called special education - but instead, support services to all children and adults, regardless of their labels, achievements or abilities. Perhaps then, I won't ever have to look into another set of eyes like Greg's and see such emptiness.

Patti McVay works with the Multnomah Supported Education Team in Portland, OR
patti_mcvay@email.mesd.k12.or.usa

If there is not struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightening. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters.
Frederick Douglass

The Index for Inclusion

Mark Vaughan, Co-Director, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE)

The Index for Inclusion is a unique set of materials designed to support ordinary schools in a process of inclusive school development. It is concerned with improving school attainments through inclusive practices and it does this for 100 per cent of pupils.

The Index, published by the UK based Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education involves ordinary primary or secondary schools in a process of self-review under three key headings, or dimensions, of - cultures, policies and practice. The British Government put a copy in every school and local education authority in England (26,500 copies) last year.

When they embark on this work, schools progress through a cycle of activities which result in the emergence of obvious and new priorities for change and this in turn leads to a series of development phases, designed by the schools themselves. The Index does not offer a blueprint for improvement and change, rather it facilitates a far reaching local scrutiny - over a period of time - of all aspects of a school's life, primarily by investigation using a number of indicators and related questions.

Many thousands of mainstream schools across England, in other parts of the UK, and in a growing number overseas, are now using the Index for Inclusion in order to investigate a wide range of aspects of what is going on in the ordinary school and to discover in a self-controlled manner how educational and social experiences for 100 per cent of pupils could be improved. The language of the Index materials is deeply inclusionary; for example, the term 'special educational needs' is not used throughout the document.

The Index, by its nature, works uniquely in different schools, helping them to construct priorities for change, in particular by identifying barriers to learning and participation for all pupils and drawing on the existing knowledge, skills and expertise of teachers and others who make up the school. There are 45 indicators in total and just short of 500 questions under which all stake-holders in the school - teachers, heads, parents, governors, students - contribute to data collection by questionnaire. The full Index cycle is designed to last about one year, though a commitment to using it for two to three years and more is strongly recommended.

The Index has been written by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow and comes out of a major project spread over three years which involved trials in 22 English schools supported the Teacher Training Agency and the Department for Education and Employment. An Index Team of 11, including heads, teachers, governors, academics and disabled people, created two earlier trial versions of the Index before compiling the third and current edition, which through a hierarchy of levels - dimensions, sections, indicators and questions – puts school development firmly and clearly in the hands of those conducting the work. Teachers and heads in the trial schools described this process of data gathering and prioritizing their own school development as greatly self empowering.

The Index, which is in a ring binder format to encourage local adaptation, amendment and photo-copying by individual schools and LEAs, (who are encouraged to work jointly with clusters of schools using the Index), runs to a 100 pages and has, since publication, been translated into Norwegian, Spanish, Finnish and German. UNESCO in Chile will be using their Spanish translation in schools in 18 Latin American countries and more in the Caribbean; shortly after publication last year, the Norwegian version began being used in a pilot group of local schools in that country; UNESCO in Paris has expressed a keen interest in developing a version for use by countries in the South, following its support over the last year for a study in Brazil, India and South Africa of how an Index in such countries might look.

Since its launch by CSIE, the Index also been translated and used in schools in Romania, Portugal and Spain and in different parts of Australia (Queensland, Tasmania and Victoria). More recently the Queensland Government has initiated a major investigation into the whole of its special education service, using the Index as key agent in that investigative process, and leaving it open (and probable) for the use of the Index by local Queensland schools to follow on from this timely enquiry. Universities in New York State and Connecticut have asked permission to trial it in groups of pilot schools in that part of America. All of these overseas initiatives have been given direct or indirect support from the on-going work of the Index Team members.

It is helpful to list some of the many priorities for change which the trial schools developed as a result of their use of the earlier pilot versions of the Index:

1 Making lessons more responsive to diversity.

2 Reviewing the school's anti-bullying policy.

3 Developing strategies, through the curriculum, to improve students' self esteem.

4 Improving all aspects of access in the school for student and adults with disabilities.

5 Promoting positive multicultural attitudes in school to help counter racism amongst some students and their families.

6 Devising a staff development program that focused on understanding students' perspectives.

7 Developing more collaborative learning amongst students.

8 Improving the induction process for new students.

Conclusion

The language of the Index is deeply inclusionary and there is anecdotal evidence of its positive influence in this area with Ministers, chief education officers, LEA administrators and professionals, schools, academics and others. It is too early to know in detail how UK schools are progressing with their use of the Index, though contact by Index Team members through their continuing work reveals an enthusiasm and commitment to the process at a local level.

Schools have reported that it can be an extremely powerful process of investigation and development, revealing far more than they are able to turn into immediate priorities for action; they also cite the real difficulties of implementing the Index process alongside the many other pressures facing mainstream schools today. It remains to be seen what proportion of schools settle down to a long term commitment to using the Index process.

Reference: Booth, T. & Ainscow, M., with additional material by Black-Hawkins, K. Edited for CSIE by Vaughan, M. & Shaw, L.. Index for Inclusion. Developing learning and participation in schools (2000) £24.50 from CSIE, Room 2S203, S Block, Frenchay Campus, Coldharbour Lane, Bristol BS16 1QU, UK.

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Personal Assistance: What It Is, and What It Is Not

Judith Snow

Within the last fifty years society realized that people with unusual abilities can participate fully in the community and contribute to society if they have the right support.

"Personal assistance" is the right support. It is not being a nurse, a butler, a housekeeper or a warden. It is functional support provided through a personal relationship.

Personal assistance includes completing the daily tasks that an individual cannot carry out themselves or that they find so time consuming as to interfere with other important activities. These tasks fall in the areas of hygiene, nutrition, dressing, mobility, and communication. Though the categories are the same for everyone the actual functions that may be required depend entirely on the individual who is being supported.

One individual who uses a wheelchair and is an accountant may require help with showering, food preparation, getting winter gear on, chauffeuring, and filing and desk set up. A person who has cognitive differences and owns her own baking business may require someone to book appointments with the hairdresser, support with shopping for her home and business, coaching on clothing selection, budget assistance to afford bus tickets, and invoice and bookkeeping support for her baking business. A third person who has extreme mood swings and is an artist may need physical assistance to bathe when depressed, coaching in food selection, reminders about the need to shop for clothes, support to recognize when not to drive, and assistance with advertising and selling their creations.

Like any good support, personal assistance is nearly transparent. Just like I want to remain unaware of the elevator that is transporting me metres above ground level, and I soon stop noticing the hum of the refrigerator that is keeping a week's supply of food fresh, a skilled personal assistant can perform his or her functions without overshadowing the contributions and personality of the person who is being assisted.

Paradoxically, personal assistance is also like a dance. The dance is led by the person who stays active in the community by relying on their assistant in an otherwise inaccessible world. Both dancers must be fully committed to the dance. They must bring a willingness to be with each other, to be honest, straightforward and respectful. Both must take responsibility to make sure that the leader of the dance really leads.

The personal and the transparent aspects of the relationship must be maintained together if the supported individual is to be in charge of their own life. Without this balancing act all that is achieved is the presence of housekeepers and wardens taking care of helpless individuals.

Some common practices still prevail that diminish the potential of personal assistance. First, individuals rarely receive the money and the opportunity to hire their own assistants. Instead money flows to agencies and schools which, in turn, hire the workers. Supported individuals have no choice over the identity of their assistants, their job descriptions, or their training. The personal nature of the working relationship doesn't get established - support doesn't become transparent. Community participation doesn't happen.

Secondly, the resources to create personal assistance are usually given only to individuals who can already show that they can direct their own "care", or to family members of those who are deemed to have the "potential" to be self directing. But without personal assistance many individuals have no means to develop and demonstrate their ability. If access to personal assistance depends on first demonstrating capacity many individuals will forever remain segregated and helpless.

Our communities will be stronger when we recognize, celebrate and adequately resource personal assistance as a mainstay of community living.

This article was published in "Investing in People" put out by the Individualized Funding Coalition of Ontario.

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We have never wanted to be alone.
But today, we are alone. We are
more fragmented and isolated from one
another than ever before. Archbishop
Desmond Tutu describes it as "a radical
brokenness in all of existence." We
move at frantic speed, spinning out into
greater isolation. We seek consolation in
everything except each other.
The entire world seems hypnotized in
the wrong direction – encouraging us
to love things rather than people,
to embrace everything new without
noticing what's lost or wrong, to choose
fear instead of peace. We promise
ourselves everything except each other.
We've forgotten the source of true
contentment and well-being.
Meg Wheatley,Turning to one another

"There is no use trying," said Alice;
"One can't believe impossible things."
"I dare say you haven't had much practice,"
said the Queen.
"When I was your age, I always
did it for half an hour a day.
Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six
impossible things before breakfast."
Lewis Carroll , Alice in Wonderland

The Community Place From Post Office to Gathering Space

Brenda Sullivan, Courant Staff Writer
Manchester Extra, Community News Section (edited)
Thursday, Nov. 22, 2001

Manchester - A young man walks briskly to the back of the Community Place, holding a sheaf of envelopes and stops abruptly. "Didn't there used to be a post office here?" he asks.

The decision not to renew the contract for the postal station when it expired on Oct. 31 was difficult because it served so many people who don't have transportation, said the shop's co-owner George Ducharme. But it was necessary.

'We have become a daily stop for many people, but the story of this place got buried by the tasks of the post office," Ducharme said.

Now, the space that was occupied by the postal Station at the Community Place has been renovated to create what the owners call a gathering space. Comfortable armchairs surround a large table decorated with fresh flowers. The space also includes a piano and a rocking chair that serves as the 'storytelling chair."

A cupboard filled with teapots and other supplies will come into play when the shop hosts "A Cup of Christmas Tea," from 2 to 4 pm. on Dec. 18. The tea is one of several events the shop will host over the next months to bring people into the shop, for sharing information and building new friendships.

"The idea of holding these teas is to focus on slowing down and enjoying some peace." Earlier this month, the shop hosted presentations, readings and discussions on the Native American perspective of 'giving thanks.' On Dec. 5, a discussion on the meaning of peace from the Islamic perspective was led by Fatma Antar, an economics professor at Manchester Community College. And from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays throughout December, Brad Barrows performed carols, hymns & popular music. A former Manchester resident and assistant choir director for the First Assembly of God Church of East Hartford, Barrows played the piano, accordion and pennywhistle.

The Community Place shop is a function of Communitas Inc., a private nonprofit organization co-founded in 1988 by Ducharme and Pat Beeman.

The partners, who met while working for the state Department of Mental Retardation, share a common dream of developing ways to support people with disabilities as they work toward fulfilling their dreams, and to foster their inclusion in the general society.

"It is about celebrating gifts - the key is, most people don't see that those with disabilities also have gifts," Ducharme said.

One of the success stories of what Communitas members refer to as "Circles of Support" is Cathy Ludlum. With the support of Communitas seven years ago, Ludlum was able to get funding for the construction of an independent-living housing cooperative called the Common Thread Co-op on St. James Place.

"What we strive to do is help people define what they want to do with their lives," Ducharme said. '"Making Circles of Support are what help activate those dreams."

Items sold at The Community Place shop play a key role in the mission of Communitas. Each one of the hundreds of cards on display is hand picked by Beeman, who manages the shop, and Beverly Jackson, who serves on the Communitas five-member board of directors.

Jackson, who has cerebral palsy, was persuaded by Ducharme to join the board eight years ago, "because Communitas isn't about client and service provider. It is about partnership," she said.

Some cards are chosen to reflect human differences. Besides recognizing a variety of spiritual practices and ethnic heritages, there are cards celebrating other differences.

A line of cards produced by Band of Angels Press, created by Cynthia Kidder, for example, features her own children who have Downs syndrome. There also is a rack of cards made from an African plant cultivated in the United States, the kanef plant, which offers an alternative to tree cutting for paper production.

"Some cards sell for as little as 40 cents. Not everyone can afford $1.50 for a card," Beeman said.

"We are more than a gift and card shop. We are a socially conscious business first."

In general, cards and gift items are chosen to reflect the values of Communitas Inc., "such as social justice, support and inclusion."

Whenever possible, Beeman chooses cards made by small local businesses. "We try to think Connecticut as well as regionally," Beeman said.

Among local items on the shop's shelves is a series of coloring books produced in Greenwich by a company called Nana Banana Classics. Proceeds from the sale of these books go to various charities, Beeman noted. All of the shop's candles come from Bolton's Liberty Candle.

"Another of our mottoes is "Fair trade versus free trade," Beeman said. "What this means is we do business with companies that pay a fair wage to the person who made the product - and we offer a fair cost to the buyer."

Choices also are based on how a product helps preserve a community.

"This is a little more difficult to achieve. But we choose recycled products – to help preserve the environment, for example, or products made by companies that are giving something back to their community."

Cards in this category include a line produced by two retired pediatric nurses, under the name of Stroke of the Heart, that benefits health care for children.

It is a great relief to be refocusing on the mission of Communitas, including writing and publishing the organizations' own publications, Ducharme said.

The shop can be reached at 860-645-3177 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and between 9 a.m. and 1 pm. on Saturdays.

George Ducharme, left, and Pat Beeman, center, are the co-founders of Communitas, Inc. – the organization behind The Community Place. Pat hand picks the shop's cards and gift items for their inclusive words and images. Beverly Jackson (right), a long-time member of the Communitas board of directors, is in charge of choosing holiday cards for the shop.

How To Build Community

Lynne Elwell

Turn off your TV
Leave your house
Know your neighbours
Greet People
Look up When you're Walking
Sit on your Step
Plant flowers
Use your Library
Play Together
Buy From Local Merchants
Share What You Have
Help a Lost dog
Honour your Elders
Be Kind to Children
Get involved with your Neighbourhood Schools
Fix it Even if you Didn't Break it
Garden Together
Have 'Jacob Joins'
Pick Up Litter
Dance in the Street
Listen to the Birds
Put up a Swing
Help Carry something Heavy
Barter for Your Goods
Start a Tradition
Hire Young People to do odd jobs
Bake extra and Share
Ask for Help when you Need It.
Share Your Skills
Turn Up the Music/Turn Down the Music
Mediate Conflict - Seek to Understand
Learn from new and Uncomfortable angles
Know that no one is silent,
though Many are not heard
Work to Change This

e-mail: lynnee@currantbun.com

Spring Inclusion Institute
April 6 - 12, 2002
Portland, Oregon

Contact Flory: 503-838-2403
flirky@aol.com

Spring Institute on Inclusion

Holiday Inn - Convention Center
Portland, OR

April 6 - 12, 2002

The Spring Institute on Inclusion offers a safe place to learn, grow and help each other move ever closer to the realization of a just, inclusive society.

For years, our Guides, Jack Pearpoint & John O'Brien have held similar events internationally. They use an innovative and exciting "learning Marketplace' approach that allows all participants to draw on their collective knowledge and experience. This learning takes place in an environment of people who are dedicated toward recognizing the gifts of all people, regardless of perceived differences.

This Institute is for thinkers and doers - for people who know there are not easy answers and who are seeking new ways of thinking and acting..

Educators, people who provide support for people with special needs, community activists, environmental activists, family members, advocates, nurses, doctors, lawyers, parents, students of all ages, literacy workers, social workers, therapists, adult educators, workers of all kinds. In short, anyone who desires or works toward a fair, just society for all people.

Special Feature: Dave Hingsburger, world renowned speaker, author will be a guest for one day.

Planning Team Members:
Jack Pearpoint, John O'Brien, Beth Gallagher, Tim Corey, Flory Ericksen, Heather Blodgett, Brent Watkins, Steve Vellanzuala

Registration Information:
call Flory Ericksen
503-838-2403 Ext. 306
or web: http://inclusion.com

In Search of Community

Ernie Pancsofar

Where is community? I asked
Is it future? Is it past?
Where is community? came the reply -
It is ground. It is sky.

What is community? I then wondered.
Is it up? Is it under?
What is community? I heard it cry.
It is presence. It can never die.

How is community? I still proposed.
Is it poetry? Is it prose?
How is community? Came back my quest.
It is here. A welcome guest.

Why is community? again I sighed.
Why is community? it still replied.

The silence is broken by the sound of a bell.
Community echoes at the bottom of your well.

E-mail: natnad@aol.com

THE NEXT DREAM ... AND THE NEXT!

Cathy Ludlum

Do people with disabilities have the right to dream? My whole life resonates with the answer. YES!

When I was born, my parents had big wonderful dreams about my future. I remember being thee years old and knowing that I would be going to college someday. As I grew, my parents nurtured any passion I developed. I wanted to be an artist, so I was showered with paints, markers, books on drawing, and art classes. Scientific interests brought me books on genetics, botany, chemistry, and even a microscope. And always, there were plays, concerts, travel, and more books. Everything pointed to the opportunities out there in the wide world, and I thought they were all for me.

My parents already knew I had a significant disability. From the time I grew too long for my stroller, I used a wheelchair for mobility. I participated in special education, and attended an adapted camp in the summer. But none of that seemed to matter. They wanted me to reach as far as I could.

In high school I began to dream of living on my own. With my extensive support needs, which included breathing problems, this was an ambitious goal. I researched options and defined the many obstacles that prevented me from living independently. Eight years and many dead ends later, I was about to give up, when I stumbled across some people who thought that my desire to live independently was not only reasonable, but attainable. On a March evening in 1987, my friends (old and new) committed themselves to making my dream come true. The housing cooperative I live in, as well as the organization that developed it, grew out of my vision and the commitment of these people; but not without a long and sometimes painful birth process.

To say that the work of creating Common Thread Co-op was monumental would be an understatement. It started in my circle of support, and at first involved finding people who knew more about housing development, had more pull, or were otherwise in a position to make it happen. Later, it involved mobilizing these people and finding more. It also required that we adapt the funding streams to fit our vision, since what we were trying to do - to develop an interdependent community of people with and without disabilities had never been done in Connecticut.

It took five years of meetings - breakfast meetings with powerful people, town meetings that went until midnight, Board meetings, finance meetings, architectural meetings, planning meetings - and visits to potential sites to make the co-op a reality. If you have ever built a house; and know of all the delays, pitfalls, and headaches that involves; multiply it by the 16 units in our complex, and you will have a sense of what we went through.

At the same time, it took a huge amount of work, on my part and on part of my friends and family, to prepare me for my new life, I had to change jobs, because it was already obvious that I would not have enough personal assistance funding from public sources, and would have to supplement it heavily with my own money. Fortunately, people were so interested in my journey, and I was learning much about housing and supports, that I was able to market these skills, both in Connecticut and beyond. I wrote and spoke about my experiences, provided technical assistance to groups involved housing and personal assistance issues, and worked with people one-on-one as they pursued their dreams of independence.

I had to learn how to hire people and train them to work with me, at home and away. My friends acted as my first assistants, helping me dress, transfer, and when necessary, cough! From them I learned to take risks and that the people around me were capable of coping with my needs. When I had staffing problems on the weekends, friends continued to come and help out. And before and after my move, my friends have been there to brainstorm solutions to problems and to support me in my difficult journey. It has now been ten years since I began hiring personal assistants and, on the whole, it s been a good experience. I have learned much from the people who work for me.

Over the last seven years, I have lived out my dream of living on my own. I have done this with the support of roommates, personal assistants, and a large network of friends, neighbors, co-workers, and fellow travelers. My co-op unit is beautiful, accessible, and close to shopping and the highway. My friends have helped me paint the rooms; gray-blue in the office, melon-orange in the hall, and robin's egg blue in the bathroom! - even when they thought my choices were a little strange. Between my ever changing support system and the dynamics of the co-op, things rarely run smoothly. But for the most part I am safe and happy with my life.

I have dreamed the impossible dream and seen it come true. So it seems almost disloyal to say I now want to live somewhere else. Why do I feel that way?

People without disabilities take for granted that they will work in various jobs during their lives, that they will live in different places, pursue dreams, accomplish them, and move on to new heights. Should not the same standard apply to those of us with disabilities? My head says, of course it should. But my gut, which is very much lo not inconveniencing others and being grateful for everything I get, is having a hard time with the next step.

When I first realized that the center of my life had shifted away from Manchester, and was waiting for me in West Hartford, I was horified. For ten years, during the five years it took me to develop the co-op and for five years after I moved in, I believed that I would live here for the rest of my life. The shift did not happen all at once, it resulted from many changes. It started with my decision to convert to Judaism. I began attending services in West Hartford, and became intrigued by the rule that worshipers live within walking distance of their synagogue. What at first seemed like an unreasonable demand, eventually began to look like a beautiful way to encourage community.

Once I actually considered the possibility of moving, other advantages came to mind. Some were as mundane as having a shorter commute to work and concerts I attend in the summer, or living in the same phone district as several people I talk with constantly. Other reasons for moving were momentous. I had learned how much work it takes to keep a co-op operating and, after five years, I wanted to focus my energy differently. I had learned that a sense of community does not automatically flow from having neighbors close by. This was disappointing, but gave me the urge to keep looking. At the same time, I felt very fortunate to have lived in such a good situation. I had met people whose circumstances were similar to what mine were ten years ago and who would give anything to live here. Perhaps it was just time for me to move on.

When I timidly mentioned to a few people that I was thinking about buying a house, I was afraid they would feel that their self-sacrifice for the co-op was in vain. Instead they said, in different ways, that we all grow out of things and dream new dreams. They are excited, and eager to walk with me as I reach for the stars yet again.

Even so, it is with a great deal of self-consciousness that I pursue the next stage of my life. Perhaps I feel differently because the urgency of this journey is less intense. It was easy to speak out the last time, to cry out that my mother was getting older and I didn't want to spend my life in a nursing home. But now the issue is not one of physical survival. Can I really move just because I want to, or is this too much of a luxury?

The answer may lie in distancing myself from my own insecurities. If my friend with a disability came to me and said, "My friends and I worked very hard to make my dream happen. Now I want something else. Do I have the right to dream another dream?" I know what I would say to her: "You absolutely do! And anyone who cares about you will be happy to see you grow to this new stage in your life."

From the Communitas Communicator, 730 Main Street, Manchester, CT

Will that be the whole cake, or just a slice?

Dave Hasbury

Every time that we find a new concept we send ourselves off into conversations that run the risk of leaving us all confused. Confusion is a natural part of change, but how many times have we gone to meetings about “inclusion”, “self-determination”, “person centered planning”, community capacity building”, “social capital”, “least restrictive environment” etc., only to leave with a massive headache and not a clue about what we just talked about?

I love working with People First because of the honesty they bring to these meetings. The flow will be stopped when one of the members raises their hand to ask the brilliant question, “What does that mean?”, or speak the straightforward truth that most of us are feeling but are afraid to say, “I don’t know what you are talking about”. And of course there is the loud statement made when someone falls asleep during the conversation, or sits with a glazed look pasted across their face, and I know at that moment that the conversation ship has just left the harbour and some of us are still standing behind on the dock.

It is not likely that we are going to stop the use of concept language. This language is a part of the change process. In fact the big concept language is really helpful if it leads us to have meaningful conversations about our understanding of it. But do we really need to stay in a confusion loop? If we are actually going to be able to do anything about the concepts we are talking about, we are going to need to find ways to understand each other so that more people can get on board to make the changes real. If we are actually going to be able to do anything about “inclusion”, we are going to have to find ways to talk with one another that include us by allowing us all to understand what we are talking about.

Graphic planning tools like MAP and PATH help us find ways that we can see what we are talking about, so that we can do something about it together. The more people that can see the same thing, the greater the possibility we will have in creating the visions that we see.

Within all of the big concepts like “inclusion” and “community”, there are so many other concepts like “choice”, “safety”, “friendship”, “participation”, and so many more. Even when we use these words that are more familiar to us, we run the risk of passing them around in the conversation without exchanging any real understanding. At the end we have this vague notion that we were near a conversation about something familiar, but not close enough to know what was being said.

At a recent workshop on using graphics, I asked the group to put out some concepts that they would like to find ways of graphically representing. One woman said, “What about comfort?” So I asked her, “What would comfort look like to you?” She said, “I don’t know”. I tried to get her to think about it, but she was clear about the fact that she really didn’t know how to represent it.

So I asked the rest of the group to provide images that would represent comfort to them, in the hopes that she would be able to identify with one of them and we would have a better understanding of what she meant. One person said, “Comfort is two people hugging”, another said, “Comfort is a big chair in front of a roaring fire”, yet another, “Comfort is snuggled up in my bed”. But the woman who brought forward the idea of comfort said, “No, no, no. None of these images are comfort to me. I know what it is now. Comfort is chocolate cake.”

And we all paused for a moment as we let that image sink in for us. You could hear the “Aahhh, I get it now”, spread throughout the room and see the heads nodding in affirmation. Now we better understood what she meant. Some of us could actually see the cake and feel what that would be like if it were us in the picture.

And then I asked, “Will that be the whole cake, or just a slice?”

“Just a slice.”, she said, with a glow of satisfaction.

When we are led around by big concepts, we are often so confused that we simply keep doing the same things and try to fit them in the new language that is being passed around. We just can’t see what these big ideas mean, so we keep the old pictures in our heads. And we don’t hear any better than we did before.

People with disabilities and their families have some pretty clear ideas about what would feel good in their lives, about what is important, and in fact what could benefit us all. If we could spend more time with each other understanding what we see and feel, exploring what it would look like, we might find that more often than not we are on the same side. Once we are there, then we can do what it takes to make it happen.

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The future belongs to those who
believe in the
beauty of their dreams.
Eleanor Roosevelt

One must still have chaos in
one’ sefl to be able to give
birth to a dancing star.
Friedrich Nietzsche

IDENTICAL BUT DIFFERENT
Jannai Miller's Diary

Karen Miller, Livingston
West Lothian, Scotland

When my twin daughters were born in July 1993, I was told they would have very different lives. They are identical so this was quite hard to take in, but I believed what I was told. When they were 4 years old I was told they would have to go to different schools. Jannai would go to the local SEN School and Hannah would go to the local mainstream Primary school. Jannai would have 'all her needs met' at her school and Hannah would be educated at her school. I believed that too. I had no reason at that time to question the good people who were doing their best for Jannai.

Time has passed and the girls are now nearly 8 years old. Hannah is in primary 3. What I have noticed is that Hannah has many friends and people in my community know her and would look out for her. But, on the other hand, no-one even knew that Hannah had a twin sister because Jannai was never 'there', she was always somewhere out with her community or in the house. In the summer when all the children were out playing in the street they assumed Jannai was a 'baby' and hadn't reached the age where children are 'set free' to play.

As Hannah got older she would pester me asking if Jannai could come to her school with her. This was the most natural thing for Hannah; she couldn't understand why her sister had to go to a different school.

I believed at the time that there were many reasons why Jannai couldn't go to Hannah's school: safety, lack of therapeutic input, and no 'specialized' facilities to name but a few. I believed Jannai needed to have this in order to be happy and whole. But, in fact Jannai was missing something very important to life. I didn't realize just how much she would gain by going to her twin sister's school.

When we finally managed to get Jannai included part-time in her sister's primary school, Hannah was counting down the days of the week - 3 days, 2 days...

Friday 19th January 2001

Jannai's first day at mainstream Primary School

08:57 - We lined up with the rest of the children. The twins were in uniform. The morning had been a mad rush as Jannai is normally still eating breakfast at this time! Sally-Anne (Jannai's support assistant) was waiting to greet Jannai. In the lines I could hear the comments in the background from the other children: 'She's cute'. 'She looks like Hannah.' 'There's Hannah's sister'. 'They look the same'

The bell went. We were in the cloakroom where there was a hustle and bustle with all the children hanging up their coats and putting on their indoor shoes. Jannai was mesmerized with all the noises. In class Jannai was introduced. The Head teacher and the Deputy Head teacher were there. The class sensed this was a very important day. Jannai sat at a desk near her sister but not right next to her. All the time Jannai was listening to the voices of the children and the teacher. There is a certain atmosphere in a classroom full of children.

09:15 - Paired reading: The P6/7 children came down to the P3 class to listen to the children reading and help them. Greg was Jannai's partner. He had been looking forward to meeting Jannai and had been learning how to spell her name.

While Greg was reading to Jannai, she was looking at him, listening intently. I could see the concentration on her face. She would look at the book then at Greg and round the table. Greg would look at Jannai when he was talking to her and touch her hand now and again. For me the interaction between the two of them was beautiful. All the time Jannai held her head up which is actually very hard for her to do. Usually Jannai dribbles a lot, but not this morning.

After paired - reading came to an end, Greg told me that Jannai really enjoyed a particular book. 'The Terrible Tigers'. There was no question about it, Greg just knew that she liked it and he didn't need any particular or specialized course to reach this conclusion. I heard him tell her that he would see her next Friday and read some more books to her. (Usually people speak to me not Jannai.)

Jannai was not 'extending' at all - Jannai has very strong muscle tone, which makes her body rigid. It usually means discomfort or unhappiness.

09-45 – Computer: Work with Sally-Anne. Jannai was listening and concentrating.

10-15 – Stretch Out: Jannai had a stretch out on a Gym mat with a wedge. John, P7 came to sit with Jannai. John is more interested in other things and doesn't care much for school. He is very imaginative and creative. He really took to Jannai and sat with her, talking to her and learning her ways.

When I gave Jannai her drink she choked a little and I was patting her chest, John was watching and he said to Sally-Anne 'are you watching, that's what to do when she coughs'? Even the different language used took me by surprise ... coughing not choking. Usually everything Jannai did was a possible medical emergency.

10:45 – Playtime: It was cold but Jannai was wrapped up and went out with the rest of the class. Obviously children surrounded her, but John was with her making sure she was ok.

11:00 - The bathroom: I took Jannai into the adapted bathroom to take care of her personal needs. The school had this all ready for Jannai arriving and the staff really enjoyed making it 'nice' (the colour co-ordinated toilet rolls and towels, the pot of pourii) and the children have taken part in making it colorful.

11:30 – Assembly: We all sat on the floor. Jannai sat between my legs so that she was supported. I didn't want her sitting in her 'special seat', which is higher up. The subject was Happy/Sad. There was a lot of clapping and singing. The certificates and awards were then handed out. Again there was a lot of clapping and congratulating. The children then sang 'Happy Birthday' to one of the children in the class. The total environment was like nothing Jannai had ever experienced - children together, singing.

12:10 – Dinners: The children lined up for dinners. On a Friday everyone has a packed lunch if they normally have a school dinner, as it is half-day. Jannai had her ticket and the dinner ladies gave her the lunch bag that had been made up with Jannai in mind. It contained everything Jannai could eat. She needs a soft, liquidized diet.

Home time: Many of the children called 'Bye, Jannai' Kyle one of the boys in her class went over to her took her hands, went right up to her and said 'Bye, Jannai'

Friday 26th January 2001

09:08 - We were late; we had forgotten to pick up Jannai's chair from her Special School. Jannai sat at the table with the rest of the children.

09:15 - Paired reading: Greg sat with Jannai again and read stories to her. Jannai was sitting up with her head up, but this time she was making lots of sounds (vocalizing) she was taking part in all the chatter. Greg understood that this was Jannai 'talking' to him.

09:45 - Computer: The teacher picked Hannah to work with Jannai. Hannah was so pleased to be picked as she was sitting up straight trying really hard to be picked. After Hannah, John worked with Jannai and they made a Pirate Picture (this is the class topic).

10: 15 - Stretch out: Jannai had a stretch out. This time the janitor was passing and he felt that Jannai should be stretching out on something better so he was going to find a better mat. Children and staff passing stopped to talk.

The morning carried on - drink - playtime

11:15 – Whole School Assembly: Jannai was presented with the class certificate for 'being nice to have in our class'. She was given the certificate at the front of the hall with the other children who were presented with them. Jannai was introduced to the rest of the school with some other children who were new. There was a lot of singing and clapping.

3 Months Later

Jannai has now been attending Harrysmuir Primary every Friday since January. When Jannai is off sick her paired-reader and children miss her in class. The children ask for her.

Another thing I have noticed is that children prefer to all be included. There was one Friday she was at school, and she was doing something different, and the children accepted it, but wondered why. So the next week she did the same work with her support assistant scribbling for her, and the children who were at her table were really pleased that she was doing the same work as them. The children in her class want to get to know her and always have a keen interest in learning how to support Jannai.

Jannai spends all her time on a Friday with the class and most importantly she does whatever they do. Sometimes activities have to be altered in a small way to include Jannai, but that is not too difficult. The staff at Harrysmuir have been very enthusiastic and imaginative, needing very little input from me.

The message given to the class is very important, if Jannai takes part then the message is positive and it teaches everyone that all means all. There should be no reason why a child is excluded from an activity because they have a disability.

During the Easter break any children I met in the street playing asked for Hannah and Jannai. Hopefully Jannai will get her new wheelchair in June and we will be reassessing the placement.

Last year I believed that it was necessary to exclude Jannai for many reasons but now I see differently. I believed what I was told. The children in Jannai's class at Harrysmuir will see that it is part of every day life to have children around them who need different support and that is what they will grow up with. They will believe differently from me and get on with it.

This is so different from where we began.

Ed: We were reluctant to print this story because it is not 'full inclusion'. But then we remembered that this is the first step in a life long journey - with many more steps to go. And too many families are still just starting.

Success

- To laugh often and much;
- To seek the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
- To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
- To appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition;
- To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded.

Emerson

HOME is Where the HEART IS

Joe Wykowski

" A home of one's own is an anchor to the community, a way to connect with neighbors and friends "

When you think of home what images do you see? Neighborhoods, community, the bread cooking in the oven? Your pet dog running in the yard? Your own funky stuff hanging on the walls?

Few opportunities in life offer as much freedom and control as owning your own home. Yet, for millions of individuals with disabilities the idea of home ownership has been out of the question.

Today while many organizations struggle to create individualized funding and housing options that promote control many more in the field of social services continue to promote the grouping of individuals according to disability. Individuals with disabilities have experienced a long history of government programs and social service agencies that limit individual freedom through group homes, nursing homes and larger institutions and medical facilities. Change seems to be available on a theoretical level but not fully embraced and supported on a funding, advocacy and systems change level.

Home ownership represents an anchoring opportunity to create community for people with disabilities. It builds upon generic community housing programs available to all people, providing the opportunity for individuals to become neighbors and taxpayers. Many people find home ownership within reach when presented with clear opportunities while given real choice to make decisions.

When first planning to have a life, shouldn't that include where you want to live? It is a fundamental step, which needs to be respected. So often we talk about just about everything else during the planning process except, where a person might want to live.

Simply, where you live can say a lot about your life and with whom you connect. Community inclusion means having a place to hang your hat that's yours.

Joe is part of a team of people who have facilitated home ownership for individuals from coast to coast.

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Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Slovenia

Irena Stebih

Slovenia is a small picturesque country located in the South Eastern part of Europe. It has population of 1.9 million. Slovenia became an independent state in 1991. However, historically, it was always heavily influenced by German and Austrian cultures. Consequently, the Slovene special educational system is very similar to the rest of Western European countries. Bunch and Valeo (chapter draft) talk about these countries as countries with sophisticated special education systems.

Slovenia has joined the world movement toward inclusive education. According to Opara (2000), in the last decade and a half, Slovenian educators "have been changing the consciousness and understanding of persons with special needs in the direction of the new culture of inclusion" (p. 30). In 1995, Slovenia announced a White Paper on Education followed by general school legislation, which had defined whether Slovenia needed a special law for children with challenges. At the same time, the whole educational system accepted the term "children with special needs." Falling under this legislation, are included children with severe disorders. It is estimated that 25% percent of students with disabilities are at a level such that they require various forms of assistance and adaptation. Therefore, the Law on Referring Children with Special Needs, adopted in 2000, is a special law that regulates only the distinctly specific questions pertaining to adaptation and the assistance for the most challenging portion of the special needs population. Opara (2000) states that in the school year 1999/2000 only 1.9% school age children with disabilities were educated in specialized institutions. Opara is concerned whether students with special needs are appropriately taken care of in the regular classrooms.

Many articles on integration in Slovenia, I have examined, point to the fact that social needs of students with challenges are not adequately met in the regular school setting. Teachers, researchers, and policy makers are especially concerned that children's social needs give way to the cognitive educational agenda. In Slovenia, the cognitive agenda in the regular classroom is still overemphasized and curriculum is based on cognitive performance.

Many articles on integration in Slovenia, I have examined, point to the fact that social needs of students with challenges are not adequately met in the regular school setting. Teachers, researchers, and policy makers are especially concerned that children's social needs give way to the cognitive educational agenda. In Slovenia, the cognitive agenda in the regular classroom is still overemphasized and curriculum is based on cognitive performance. My hope is that students with challenges will be academically and socially fully included in their community schools. I agree with Bunch (1999) who states that "inclusion and the diversity of ability of the students in a classroom means that the traditional model requires adjustment" (p. 138). How educational models are adjusted in different countries around the globe must be based on their cultural and historical framework. Slovenia is certainly one of the countries striving to give students with special challenges equal voices in the regular classroom by moving to an inclusive stance.

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Inclusive Education in India

Priti Joshi

India has a population of over one billion. Persons with disabilities are estimated to be about 5%-6% of the population. The poor literacy rate in the country (males=71%, females=44%) is an overriding educational concern. The challenge is to enrol out-of-school children and to retain them by providing meaningful education. Only 2% of the disabled have been reached through conventional institution-based strategies. Their exclusion from education is part of the larger pattern of inequality and discrimination faced by various groups. Although formal systems of support are inaccessible or unavailable to persons with disability, they have access to a network of relationships in extended family and/or community.

Segregated education in special schools has not been a norm as few schools exist. Children with mild disabilities may be "casually" mainstreamed so long they can assimilate within the system. On the other hand many premier schools deny admission to children since the system values high levels of academic attainment. A few private schools in cities offer a three-level-system–from a segregated to a partially integrated to a regular class placement. Teacher-discourse has revolved around an inability to cope with special needs in large classes. Parents prefer educating their children in an inclusive school unless the disability is profound, in which case a segregated setting is likely to be the choice.

Many examples of good practice in inclusive education exist. A movement for creating "child-friendly schools", that also make learning joyful and relevant is gaining impetus. Excellent initiatives are being taken with the help of community participation. For example, programmes are initiating professional development and parent involvement by creating a "space" for teachers and parents to raise questions, demands and expresses frustrations. These innovations have remained restricted to a few schools and have not been able to change the formal system.

Dating from 1974 policies have stressed integrated education, particularly for those with mild to moderate disability and have laid special emphasis on equalising educational opportunities. Subsequently projects have been launched to fulfil the stated provisions with limited success. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education, 2000, makes several prescriptions to address education of those with disability in an inclusive setting. "Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act", 1995, is an important legislation. It has emphasised provision of educational in regular schools or special school wherever appropriate (Ministry of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, 1996). It envisages removal of physical and social barriers to education and provision for redressal of grievances of parents regarding educational placement of their children. The Act still awaits appropriate implementation.

In the present situation, inclusion for those with disability can be understood to mean access not only to mainstream education but to a special school or a partially segregated setting which offers meaningful education and values the student.

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> Though I do not believe that
> a plant will spring up where
> no seed has been, I have great
> faith in a seed. Convince me
> that you have a seed there, and I
> am prepared to expect wonders.
>
> Henry David Thoreau

> Chidren should be the first
> to benefit from the successes
> of mankind, and the last to
> suffer from its failure.
>
> James Grant

Inclusive Education: Peruvian Experience

Joana Ortega-Matienzo & Maria Esther Loayza Alvarez

The 1990 "Education for All" conference in Jomtien, Thailand advocated for the right to include children with a wide variety of abilities and experiences in the regular classroom. Consequently, the Peruvian government and the Special Needs Unit of the Ministry of Education initiated a project entitled "Inclusion project of children with special educational needs" in 1992.

In the first phase of the project (1992-1996) the ministry of Education created a National Co-ordination committee responsible for overseeing the development of the project in the cities of Arequipa, Cajamarca, Ica and Lima-Callao. Criteria were established to select the students, schools and classrooms to be included in the pilot process. Support teams were established to assess and monitor the development of all the students involved in the project. The project was facilitated in kindergarten classrooms with 20 students and elementary classrooms with 25 students.

The project has recognized that certain conditions must exist in order to ensure a successful inclusion:

- Professional training and support of teachers in the inclusive classroom.
- Sensitivity and awareness training of all involved people in the process.
- The creation of a flexible curriculum.
- Inclusion since the early stages of development.
- Gradual transference of responsibility to principals in each school.

Even though the project has been in place for almost a decade, it is not widely known in the country. To date, many teachers are unaware of the scope of the project or the cities and schools that are currently in the process of establishing an inclusive classroom. Furthermore, documents published over the past decade by the Ministry and governmental institutions regarding inclusion have mainly addressed inclusion in terms of gender, ethnicity, and economic background. Consequently, the Peru research team is currently engaging in an analysis of laws enacted by the government, publications from governmental institutions and reports from current projects to determine the real meaning of inclusion in the Peruvian context. The main purpose of the research team is to bring awareness to Peruvian education professionals of the social need to include students with cognitive, physical and learning disabilities in the classroom with the same dedication as the inclusion of children from other disadvantaged groups.

> Martin Luther King Jr.
> 1929-1968
>
> Human Progress is neither
> automatic nor inevitable.
>
> Even a superficial look at history
> reveals that no social advance
> rolls in on the wheels of
> inevitability. Every stop toward
> the goal of justice requires
> sacrifice, suffering, and struggle;
> the tireless exertions and
> passionate concern of
> dedicated individuals.
>
> Without persistent effort, time
> itself becomes an ally of the
> insurgent and primitive forces of
> irrational emotionalism and social
> destruction. This is no time
> for apathy or complacency. This
> is a time for
> vigorous and positive action.

> **There are some aspects of
> a person's life that we have
> no right to compromise. We
> cannot negotiate the size of
> an institution: no one should
> live in one. We can not
> function on a committee to
> determine who does and does
> not get medical treatment:
> everyone does. We cannot
> debate who should get
> integrated education:
> ALL must.**
>
> Lou Brown

Outing The Prejudice: Making The Least Dangerous Assumption

Zach Rossetti & Carol Tashie

People with disabilities are people first. Because of the presence of a disability, a person may act, get around, look, dance, smile, read, learn, show what she knows, or communicate differently. The key here is that this is a difference and not a deficiency. As humans, we are all alike only in that we are all different. The fact that society tends to create a hierarchy of these differences, by labeling some of them deficiencies, is a manifestation of an out-dated paradigm plagued by prejudice. This inherent prejudice against people with disabilities means that some differences will be defined as deficiencies and looked down upon by all of those "higher up" on the social ladder.

What makes this even worse is that most people do not even recognize this prejudice. It is disguised as compassion and justified as "help." The segregation of people with disabilities into "special" classrooms and separate lives is justified by this paradigm of deficiency. Too many people continue to believe that, "since they do not look or act like us, they must not be as good as us." This way of thinking needs to be outed, challenged, and changed in order for all people to be valued just as they are.

Anne Donnellan, in her book *Movement Differences and Diversity in Autism-Mental Retardation: Appreciations and Accommodations People With Communications and Behavior Challenges* (1994), identified why this old paradigm was not sufficient and needs to be replaced by a more humanistic and respectful one. The key to the new paradigm is the concept of the "Least Dangerous Assumption."

"Least dangerous assumption" states that in the absence of absolute evidence, it is essential to make the assumption that, if proven to be false, would be least dangerous to the individual. She continues by explaining that the "absence of evidence can never be absolute evidence of absence," and as such, it is always safest and most respectful to make the "least dangerous assumption."

Consider it this way. If I were to go fishing for a week and not catch any fish, there would be two assumptions that could be made. First, I could say "there are no fish in the lake since I did not catch any, and I know what I am doing." Or, second, I could say simply that "I did not catch any fish that week, and I will keep on trying." The first assumption seems rather arrogant, while the second one is more realistic and respectful. (There is a third assumption that I could make which would be that I am not a good fisherman, but we won't go there).

The same holds true for students with disabilities. Imagine a child who does not talk with the spoken word and moves around using a wheelchair. Her teachers have worked with her for a month and have not yet seen any evidence of what she understands. In fact, they wonder if she knows or is aware of anything at all. These teachers can make one of two assumptions. They can assume that "what you see is what you get" and that this child does not know anything, that her brain is as empty as that lake. As such, they can educate her in a way that reflects those assumptions (perhaps segregated classes or regular classes with low or no expectations). Now imagine her as she graduates and uses a communication device to say, "Why did you treat me so poorly?!! I am smart and you wasted twelve years of my life!" A very dangerous assumption was made, with results that none of us would desire.

Now, consider the second assumption. These same teachers can recognize that her movement differences are differences and not deficiencies. They can assume that she knows lots and just isn't currently able to show what she knows. Her brain is as full of knowledge and potential as that lake is of fish, but they just have not been able to reel anything in yet. As such, her schooling would reflect these high expectations and she would be considered and respected as a valued member of her school and classes. Now again, imagine her twelve years later at graduation, using her communication device to say, "Thank you from the bottom of my heart to all of my teachers who believed in me and made me feel as if I truly belonged and treated me like all of my classmates." This is the least dangerous assumption, one that results in a young woman who can celebrate her full and fulfilling life.

But consider a third scenario as well. What if we never come up with a way for this young woman to communicate her intelligence? What if, after twelve years as a valued and respected student in all general education classes, we still do not know exactly what she has learned and knows? What harm was done? What was lost? Nothing. And that truly is the least dangerous assumption.

Understanding the concept of "least dangerous assumption" and acting on it are two different things. The idea of considering all people as capable and intelligent may not come naturally to some people due to the influence of society's prejudices against people with disabilities. Most well intentioned adults and professionals have been taught to believe in the out-dated paradigm and, therefore, may make very dangerous assumptions about students with disabilities. Many people's first impressions of people with disabilities are tainted by years of societal prejudice and media portrayals of what is enviable and worthwhile. While the power of these experiences is strong, we can no longer allow this to serve as a justification for the perpetuation of the prejudices against students or adults with disabilities.

The question we should all be asking ourselves is: "Do you really believe that the individual with disabilities is a valued and competent and unique person?" Think long and hard about that question. If you cannot honestly answer "yes," then the next question is simply, "Why?" Think about your beliefs, your experiences, and the prejudice you have been taught. Ask yourself how you can change those dangerous assumptions and mindsets. Talk with people who are friends, parents, siblings, lovers, and colleagues of people with disabilities. Listen to people who have been segregated or devalued because of the way they look or move or communicate. Learn everything you can about the many ways people communicate and get around and show us who they are and what they know. Introduce yourself to people who had labels of mental retardation while in school, who now are able to communicate their thoughts and feelings and tell us all, loud and clear, "I am intelligent!" Recognize your prejudices and work through them. It will not be as difficult as it first seems. And you will never again make assumptions about people that result in the loss of opportunity, experience, or respect.

All people are people first. Everyone belongs to this wonderful life. No one should have to conform to someone else's standards before they are told that they are "good." We all belong. We all have strengths and weaknesses and our own individual potential to be great people and to live the lives we want. We can all lead happy and fulfilling lives, supported by those around us to be successful adults. It is up to all of us to examine our own core beliefs and to spread the word of the least dangerous assumption. We can no longer allow the justification of a prejudice that is so dangerous. Now is definitely the time to believe that all people are valued individuals with limitless potential. Keep on fishing - the lake is overflowing!!

http://www.iod.unh.edu

A Family Day-Qut to Chester Zoo

Owen Cooper
Manchester, England

On the 15th April 2000 Howard had a special day out. Instead of the normal one-one activity,

Howard was asked if he would like to accompany a family on their day trip to Chester Zoo. Howard agreed and was very glad he did.

Vicky (who works for IAS), her husband, John, and her two children, Matthew and Lucy, picked up Howard and included him in their day trip. A fabulous time was had by all, and both of the children and Howard enjoyed each others company and are looking forward to the next trip.

Vicky's husband was asked to write a little about his thoughts and experience, His comments follow:

On the 15th April I was asked would I go to Chester Zoo with my wife and one of the gentlemen she supports. I was a little apprehensive at first as I didn't really know Howard that well. The day went really well. Howard walked around Chester Zoo holding my hand and responded well when I spoke to him, Towards the end of the day Howard and myself went for a walk on our own whilst Vicky helped the children buy something from the shop. It was an excellent day and I look forward to going out again with one of the gentlemen that Vicky supports.

John Threlfall

This is just one example of some of the excellent work that is going on throughout the Company to help create quality experiences and lives for the people we support. It also wonderfully demonstrates how everybody can gain when we go outside our comfort zones and take a calculated risk. It's about being open to possibilities and recognizing that most of us need a prompt/push for that to happen; part of our role is to see the possibilities and to create opportunities where many people's lives can be enriched.

ASK, PUSH, PROMPT, TAKE THE INITIATIVE.

E-mail: owencoops@aol.com

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and citizenship.
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Philia by engaging in
the values. WE are all
Philia. Visit the web
site and explore more.
Join us in a dialogue on
citizenship for all.

We believe:

* Citizenship involves belonging, rights, responsibilities, relationships and contributions.

* People with disabilities have both the capacity and responsibility to exercise their citizenship.

* People with disabilities have unique and critical contributions to make to the health and well being of our communities.

* Focusing on disability and handicap overshadows an individual's gifts, skills and talents.

* Our communities and neighbourhoods are inherently resilient and hospitable.

* Ensuring the active presence of people with disabilities in community life benefits families, neighbourhoods and communities.

Wtihout equity there can be no true excellence. Yet equity without excellence is a hollow prize indeed.
Deborah Meier

INCLUSION PRESS

is affiliated with the

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(formerly the Centre for Integrated Education and Community)

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Inclusion News is an occasional publication from the Centre. Presently there are no subscriptions. We welcome comments, suggestions and donations. **Inclusion News** is funded entirely independently.

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Injustice anywhere is a threat
to justice everywhere.
Martin Luther King Jr.

Inclusion is Not Exclusion

Marsha Forest

Inclusion is
the future.

Inclusion is
belonging
to one race
the human race.
Inclusion is
a basic human right.
Inclusion is
struggling
to figure out
how to live
with one another.

Inclusion is not
something you do
to someone
or for someone.
It is something we do
with one another.
Inclusion is
not a person -
"the inclusion kid."
not a program
not an adjective
not an add on.
Inclusion is
a noun.

Inclusion is not
something we do a little of.
It either is
or isn't.
It is not a fad
or a bandwagon.
Inclusion is
a trend,
similar to democracy
"With liberty and justice for all."
All means all.
No but's about it!
Inclusion
is the opposite
of exclusion.
Inclusion is not
exclusion.

Inclusion is fair play
common sense
common decency
hard work.
Inclusion is
elegant in its simplicity
and, like love
awesome in its complexity.

Inclusion is
a battle cry
a parents cry
a child's cry
to be welcomed
embraced
cherished
prized
loved as a gift
as a wonder
as a treasure.

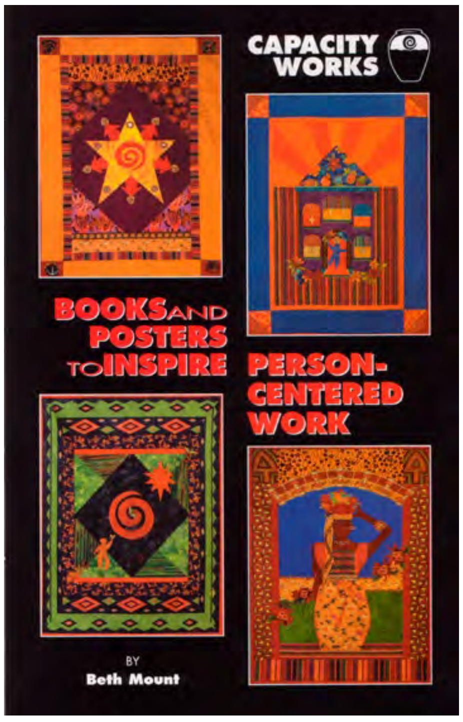
Inclusion is not
spending more money on
building more prisons
mental hospitals
nursing homes
group homes
Inclusion is
investing in real homes
real life
real people
all people.

Inclusion is
pain
struggle
joy
tears
grief
mourning
celebration!

Inclusion is
the ship that isn't even built yet.
It is a new ship.
One we will build together.

Inclusion is like a good jazz combo,
like an orchestra
disciplined to play melody
in harmony.
Inclusion is
a kaleidoscope of diversity .
bits of color
sounds, shapes, sizes.

Inclusion is
the future.



Capacity Works

Beth Mount

It is good to find that, in these times, there are those who meet to exchange their ideas concerning the ultimate goals of existence. What could be more moving in our community here on earth than to listen closely to a human heart, to hear in it the throbbings of a world, its sighs and its dreams?

Marc Chagall, 1963

The essence of person-centered planning is to listen closely to the hearts of people with disabilities, and to imagine together and work with them toward a better world in which they can be valued members, contribute, and belong. Through my artwork and stories, I am creating a language of the human heart that pulses with a song of freedom.

Throughout time, people from all cultures have used images and symbols to communicate with one another, make meaning of their experience, represent their inner and outer worlds, and map life journeys. I draw on these universal symbols and combine them with text to tell stories of hope and freedom, and personal and social change.

My interest in this work is inspired by the courage and determination of people with disabilities and the families that work with them to develop optimistic ideals in the face of limiting constraints. It is my hope that each image I create will serve as a reminder of the capacity that we have, both individually and together, to overcome challenges, celebrate our differences as well as our similarities, build lives of meaning and worth, and create communities.

BethMount
GraphicFutures@earthlink.net

We do not great things,
we do only small things
with great love.
Mother Teresa

Each Belongs

Celebrating Thirty Years of Fully Inclusive Education In Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

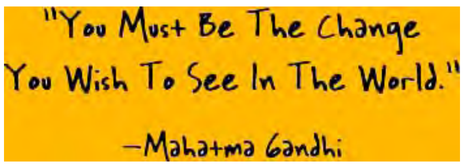
a Book & and Video

The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board has just celebrated 30 Years of Fully Inclusive Education for All. Their mission statement: **"EACH BELONGS".**

Now you can SEE and READ about the story. There is a fifteen minute video that says that all children can be included - from elementary grades through to high school graduation - if we want and believe in a system where "EACH BELONGS". A stunning segment shows two high school students telling about their experiences. One is in a wheelchair; the other on his feet. Which has benefited more will be your challenge question. The video was created by students and faculty. Show it to anyone who doubts that inclusive education is possible. Listen to parents, teachers, and administrators who, without a shadow of a doubt, know that "Each Belongs." While many systems are still debating whether to welcome all children to their schools, Hamilton, under the leadership of Jim Hansen, Phil DiFrancesco and Betty Browne, has been doing it - with no extra budgets – for thirty years. Their secret is extra love and caring for all.

The book is a documentary history of how they did it. Board minutes, reports, letters from teachers, families. If you want to see how it was done from the inside, Jim Hansen has compiled his remarkable story - with a lot of help from his friends.

Available from Inclusion Press.



"You Must Be The Change
You Wish To See In The World."
—Mahatma Gandhi

Listening

Dan Wilkins

http://www.thenthdegree.com/onlisten.htm

In our fast-paced, "drive-thru", cost-cutting, downsizing, gameboy world, the Chinese kanji, "Ting", representing the verb "to listen" is significant in that it explains the difference between simply hearing and truly listening. By integrating representations of not only our ears, but of our eyes, our heart and the selfless act of undivided attention, the Chinese have truly captured the essence of "listening." It is so important in any dialogue to listen to one another with our whole bodies, to come from a non-egocentric, "non-self" perspective. By doing this, we show respect and value for the other and leave ourselves open to understanding a larger truth. We must believe, as Thich Nhat Hanh says, that we "can receive truth from outside…that we can come away transformed by what is good, beautiful and meaningful in another."

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Miller's MAP - MAPS in Action	$55 + $8 shipping /1st copy		
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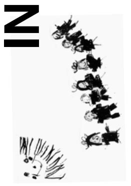

A Quote:
"Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood." - Madam Curie

Conversation, however, takes time. We need time to sit together, to listen, to worry and dream together. As this age of turmoil tears us apart, we need to reclaim time to be together. Otherwise, we cannot stop the fragmentation.
Meg Wheatley,
Turning to one another

Until the lions have their own historians, Tales of hunting will always glorify the hunters.
African Proverb

The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in time of great moral crisis, maintian their neutrality.
Dante

Real Power can not be given, it must be taken. The Goodfather III

You learn to read so you can identify the reality in which you live, so you can become a protagonist of history rather than a spectator.
Father Fernando Cardenal
Director - literacy campaign in Nicaragua.

Mystery

Ernie Panscofar

Mike
To me
Is a Mystery
About Diversity
Respect & Dignity
Freedom & Liberty.

I yearn
To learn

The message
Of his passage

As he comes into my life.

His mom is confused
by the latest professional news.

He creates quite a scene
To the School's quiet routine.

Mike & Joe & Susan & Paul
I've learned a lot from working with you all.

Where do I go this year?
That's why I'm here!

You must give birth to your images.
They are the future waiting to be born.
Fear not the strangeness you fell.
The future must enter you
Long before it happens.
Just wait for the birth,
For the hour of new clarity.
Rainer Maria Rilke

If it's in your way, climb over it.

Don't answer until you are ready to.

The soul thinks in images.
Aristotle

We do not great things, we do only small things with great love.
Mother Teresa

We are each of us angels with only one wing. And we can only fly embracing each other
Luciano De Creschenzo

If it's in your way, climb over it.

Don't answer until you are ready to.

Humankind:
Be Both

I'm Possible

I am as I am
and you are as you are.
Let's build a world where
I can be, and not have to cease
being me, where you can be,
without having to cease
being you, a world where
many worlds

Subcomandante Marcos
spokesperson for Mexico's Zapatista rebels

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Unless you are one of those folk who come home from a nice sweaty run or a bike ride or a pick up game, plop down in the lazyboy and kick off from a massive heart attack, chances are you are going to spend some of your time living with a disability. The amount and quality of "living" that you do and enjoy will greatly depend upon how accessible and accommodating the world around you happens to be at that time.

Currently, there are many, many people fighting an uphill battle for that access and accommodation. They are stubborn. They fight with a tenacity and sense of urgency that comes from knowing oppression and understanding that time matters. They may appear selfish or self-serving, but not really ...

This site is about "enlightened self-interest", yours, mine, everyone's; about recognizing today's injustices and future possibilities, finding connection and taking ownership, and working to create a more equitable and supportive world.

If we are to make this world a better place for everyone we must make it a better place for those of us living with disabilities, for we are everyone, now and someday.

There is a wealth of wisdom and knowledge in the world regarding ways of improving the world ... our schools, businesses, communities ... for all of us, including people living with disabilities and much of it can be found in the voices and stories of Disability Culture. This site is a connection to some of those voices and stories.

I am one of you, I am one of us and this is my website. Welcome and Enjoy.