

Subj: Fwd: Announcing the Founding of the International  
Association for Inclusive Citizenship  
Date: Monday, January 6, 2003 8:20:49 AM  
From: s-dobrowolski@northwestern.edu  
To: jlmabcd@aol.com

*Judith*

>Date: Thu, 2 Jan 2003 11:01:38 -0600  
>To: John McKnight <jlmabcd@aol.com>  
>From: Sarah Dobrowolski <s-dobrowolski@northwestern.edu>  
>Subject: Fwd: Announcing the Founding of the International  
>Association for Inclusive Citizenship  
>Cc:  
>Bcc:  
>X-Attachments: :Macintosh HD:256907:personalasst/01.doc:  
>  
>John,  
>Attached is Judith's note, in case you haven't received it already.  
>Thanks  
>Sarah

>  
>  
>  
>>Date: Mon, 30 Dec 2002 20:51:53 -0500  
>>Subject: Announcing the Founding of the International Association for  
>>Inclusive Citizenship  
>>From: "Judith Snow" <judiths@ica.net>  
>>X-Priority: 3  
>>  
>>Happy New Year!  
>>  
>>This e-mail is the announcement of the formation of the  
>>International Association for Inclusive Citizenship.  
>>  
>>This is going to be a long e-mail. I encourage you to skip to the  
>>end if you are not inclined to read long documents. I have a few  
>>requests at the end to ask you -- simple ones! I don't want you to

who  
>>miss them so please go there now if you are in a hurry.

>>

>>There are already sixteen members of the International Association  
>>for Inclusive Citizenship (IAIC). We are going to be a real  
>>presence in the world -- with members, chapters, projects and  
>>resources. Our fundamental purpose is very important -- Pride and  
>>Celebration.

>>

>>My desire to start the IAIC comes from my life journey. I have long  
>>struggled with the idea that I am "disabled". I don't experience  
>>myself as disabled. Of course, I don't mean that I don't notice  
>>that I have very limited use of my body. I am perfectly aware that  
>>I don't walk, I require hours a day of assistance to accomplish the  
>>simplest of tasks, I struggle to keep breathing adequately and I  
>>can't spontaneously hug and kiss friends, lovers and family.

>>

>>These realities impact me and others around me moment by moment.  
>>These realities can't be denied!

>>

>>What I find to be the REAL struggle is the ever present assumption  
>>that this state of "me" -- this way of being -- is somehow a lesser  
>>path, a misfortune, a mistake, a disadvantage, an embarrassment.

>>

>>In the past thirty years more and more people have been claiming  
>>our right to be respected as we are. As an example, the Social  
>>Model is a theory of disability that is popular in the UK and  
>>Canada. It aims to empower us by locating the source of our  
>>difficulties in the social and physical environment. This is a very  
>>strong idea.

>>

>>Just the same, in spite of our growing liberation, we still are led  
>>to believe about ourselves that our physical, cognitive and  
>>emotional differences are impairments. Surely, if I am impaired  
>>then one morning I will sober up, and be able to walk about and  
>>make my own breakfast. No, this isn't going to happen, nor do I  
>>spend time longing for the big change. This is the real me - the  
>>only, actual Judith Snow!

>>

>>The central difficulty I find is the subtle, incessant and  
>>insistent reference to physical, cognitive and behavioural  
>>standards society calls normal. We all know that these normal  
>>standards are myths. They exist in reality neither socially, nor  
>>even personally. In other words no one is an example of "normal" at  
>>any time, except perhaps for the briefest moment. Should you fit  
>>the norm at any one moment in your life you can be sure that  
>>growing age, greater experience, even the fruits of your labours

>>and accomplishments will soon give you a personal and social  
>>distinction that sets you apart. Normal is unattainable. *& undesirable*  
>>

>>What this means for me personally is that I must continually shake  
>>myself awake. It is too easy to fall into the trance of trying to  
>>be someone else - someone that looks like me but walks and hugs.  
>>Like a deer caught in headlights, I am sometimes frozen into  
>>pretending I were, or comparing myself to, or mistaking others  
>>for . something called normal. Caught in this fantasy I end up  
>>feeling that I fall short in some way. I become in my own eyes, not  
>>to mention the eyes of others, not good enough or capable of  
>>coping. Problems and challenges become insurmountable. Resignation  
>>and negativity rule the day.

>>

>>As an example, when I was very young I rolled from place to place  
>>in my house. When I was six I was transformed into a standing  
>>person through a series of painful manipulations that involved  
>>breaking my bones, putting my legs into casts and bracing me in  
>>steel and leather from toes to waist. By the time I was eight not  
>>only had I lost what little muscle I had from the waist down, but  
>>my arms were weakening and I could no longer roll myself around.  
>>This example is extreme and personal, but I see similar blatant and  
>>subtle examples everyday in my own life and in the lives of others.  
>>

>>What makes more sense - and is actually possible - is for me to be  
>>myself and to fulfill the possibilities that I actually have. My  
>>aim in life is to discover and develop the relationships,  
>>abilities, responsibilities and contributions that are truly  
>>available to me now . and now . and now on into an uncertain and  
>>ever evolving future.

>>

>>Living in this way requires imagination, courage, communication,  
>>resourcefulness and a flair for celebration.

>>

>>Living in two spaces - disabled and normal - has been a stress for  
>>me. When I am at work providing keynotes, traveling  
>>internationally, maintaining my home in Toronto, and making car and  
>>mortgage payments I find myself physically isolated from and

>>socially estranged from others who are called disabled. When I join  
>>in at a People First dance or sit quietly with someone who doesn't  
>>speak I feel personally at home yet strangely burdened by my life's  
>>patterns of work and association.

>>

>>A truly inclusive world would unite my two worlds. That world would  
>>recognize and maintain a space that celebrates diversity, and it  
>>would be a space that is honoured, appreciated, dynamic and  
>>abundant.

>>

>>In forming the International Association for Inclusive Citizenship  
>>I am creating a model of this space. It is to be a space of  
>>membership, pride and celebration.

>>

>>There are many other people in this world who, like me, are labeled  
>>disabled and are committed to living fully in mainstream society.  
>>The IAIC is for us.

>>

>>The IAIC is for those of us who aim to live, work, play and pray in  
>>the real world. Our so-called disabilities don't define us. We are  
>>intentionally striving to nurture friendship and love, to take  
>>charge of our lives, and to make contributions to the economic,  
>>social and political world around us. We assert the importance of  
>>building a world where everybody's abilities are part of the mosaic  
>>of everyday life.

>>

>>In the IAIC space we are whole. We are citizens that are BOTH  
>>people with unusual and challenging abilities and limitations, and  
>>people who are intentionally living out our responsibilities and  
>>opportunities as full members of society.

>>

>>There are many other people who are not yet labeled disabled. Some  
>>of these so called normal people are also aiming to live, work,  
>>play and pray in the real world. They also are intentionally  
>>striving to nurture friendship and love, to take charge of their  
>>lives, and to make contributions to the economic, social and  
>>political world around them. They also assert the importance of  
>>building a world where everybody's abilities are part of the mosaic

>>of everyday life.

>>

>>The IAIC is also for them -- for us! Our commitments to building  
>>inclusion and being inclusive bind us together and give us much to  
>>celebrate.

>>

>>I envision many ways that we can develop the IAIC. Please notice  
>>that I say "We". From this point on I am doing nothing without the  
>>collaboration of other members. I intend to be a strong influence  
>>but very much a colleague as we develop our own vehicle to  
>>celebrate ourselves.

>>

>>I see us beginning by using e-mail and free internet chat rooms. As  
>>our resources increase we will reach out to others in our local  
>>areas by phone, TV, radio and post.

*community  
tech*

>>

>>We will develop small, local chapters, networked together  
>>internationally. At the local level we will operate like clubs,  
>>concentrating on the social, fun and celebration interests of  
>>members. On a broader level we will discuss and impact social  
>>policy - regionally and internationally. We will bridge the work of  
>>disability rights groups with the work of other human rights and  
>>democratic renewal groups - reflecting our place as included  
>>citizens.

*from  
activities  
social  
policy  
Bridge*

>>

>>We will have fun, feel great about ourselves and impact all those  
>>things in our communities that matter to us: housing,  
>>transportation, personal assistance, income, jobs, access,  
>>education, information, research, communication, love, friendship,  
>>respect, safety, wellness, health care, sex, fun, leisure, family,

>>children, spirituality, worship, social diversity, bio-diversity,  
>>the environment, democracy, and peace!  
>>  
>>In order to get rolling we will require some fundamentals. I'm  
>>thinking we need to:  
>>- design a basic vision statement and charter that defines membership;  
>>- make some decisions about membership - e.g. one class of  
>>membership, or many; does anyone get excluded?;

>>- develop a local, national and international structure;  
>>- get out an e-newsletter and work out ways to translate it into  
>>four or five languages;  
>>- work out ways to be fully accessible and,  
>>- do some fundraising.

>>  
>>I am doing this work voluntarily now, but I aim to make this a paid  
>>position as our fundraising takes effect. I will be nominating  
>>myself as the first Executive Director of IAIC.

>>  
>>I am attaching to this e-mail a sample article as might appear in  
>>our forthcoming newsletter.

>>  
>>So here are my requests.  
>>Please:

>>- reply when you get this e-mail, to say if you are in or out. ✓  
>>- send this e-mail out widely.  
>>- tell me if you are willing to be on a founding committee - local, ✓  
>> national and/or international.  
>>- say what you think about membership criteria for IAIC.  
>>- suggest activities for the IAIC.  
>>- suggest how to make our communication and activities fully accessible.  
>>- give me fundraising suggestions and even volunteer to do some.  
>>- ask any questions you have.  
>>- \*\*\* I specifically require immediately some hints about setting  
>>up a chat room and a data base.\*\*\*

>>  
>>This being early in the process, you may get this e-mail sent to  
>>you more than once, from me or forwarded from other people. I  
>>apologize for this overlap. I promise we will work out ways to

>>streamline our communication. A website perhaps?!?

>>

>>Welcome to the pride and celebration of being an included citizen.

>>Welcome to a world that honours everyone's abilities. Welcome to

>>the International Association for Inclusive Citizenship.

>>

>>

>>Judith Snow



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