



From the Executive Director's Desk

— Claire Mantonya

Time to Get Involved!

With the downturn in the economy, many services that support people with disabilities to live independent lives in their communities may be in jeopardy of funding cuts. It is extremely critical that advocates do what they do best – educate their elected officials about the importance of funding critical services for our community. Our Legislature will be making important funding decisions shortly and the only way that Legislators can understand how their vote will impact lives is for them to hear directly from you.

By going to the Utah Legislature's website at www.le.state.ut.us, you can look up your own representative and senator. This website is full of up to date information on what is happening at the Legislature, and I encourage you to visit it often during the upcoming 2009 Legislative Session – bookmark it as one of your favorites!

The best way to learn how to be an effective advocate is to attend a training by the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities (LCPD). They are holding a training on December 4th. If you are able to attend, please contact them at trouse@usilc.org or 801-463-1592.

This is the time to become involved and to tell your story to your elected officials so they will know how important funding services for people with disabilities is to you and your family.

Happy holidays to you, and make a New Year resolution to work with the Council in 2009 to advocate on behalf of the people and families who depend upon services throughout the State of Utah!

WEBINAR/PHONE CONFERENCE

Reducing the Stigma Associated with Disability

December 10, 2008

12:00 PM - 3:00 PM \$30/site

The webinar will assist agencies, family members and direct support and other professionals learn what they can do to increase positive public perceptions about people with disabilities. Social marketing techniques to cultivate increased public awareness and appreciation for people with disabilities as well as strategies that individuals can use in everyday interactions with the general public, employers, children, neighbors, and community leaders will be explored. For more information email or call

Mary Mercer or Jana Kremer: 1-800-233-1737

Mary.mercer@minotstateu.edu, jana.kremer@minotstateu.edu

Deadline for guaranteed registration is Wednesday, December 3rd, 2008.

Presented by the North Dakota Center for People with Disabilities through the Minot State University Center for Excellence



Council Member Dances with the Starzz!

Our very own Reed Hahne, UDDC Council member, participated in the 2008 Dancing with the Starzz event sponsored by Best Buddies of Utah on Saturday, November 8. Reed had the opportunity to dance with one of Utah's local celebrities, Mrs. Mary Kay Huntsman. The formal event was held in the Little America Hotel Ballroom.

The mission of Best Buddies is to enhance the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment.

Kimberly Yeoman named Miss Wheelchair Utah 2009

On November 15, 2008 Kim Yeoman was selected as this year's Miss Wheelchair Utah. The Third Annual Pageant took place in Salt Lake City in the Grand Ballroom of the Salt Palace.

Ms. Wheelchair Utah—the Inner Beauty Pageant, is dedicated to the betterment of Utah by selecting inspiring women in wheelchairs to motivate Utahns of all abilities with their own stories of personal triumph. Kim will spread her personal message of inspiration, “Building a new tomorrow by promoting the abilities of every person” across the state and will represent Utah next year in the National competition.



Congratulations Kim!



Just a reminder to please note the date of our next full council meeting! We will not have a January 2009 meeting, but will have our meeting on February 3rd, 2009 in the Spruce Room of the Capitol Building. The meeting will start at 11:30 a.m., with lunch served at Noon, and end at 3:00 p.m.

The LCPD Legislative Reception will start at 4:00 p.m in the Capitol Rotunda and will end at 6:00 p.m.



UTAH WORKS SURPASSES FIRST YEAR'S GOALS

The purpose of The Utah Association of Community Services (UACS), Division of Utah Works, is to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities within our community rehabilitation programs, by securing State contracts for their purchase of commodities and services.

Our goal for the first year was to achieve five to seven state contracts and employ thirty people with disabilities. We are very pleased that we surpassed that goal by securing eleven contracts and employing NINETY THREE people with disabilities. These employees worked a total of 21,760 hours of direct labor and were paid a total of \$156,311.00. The average wage was \$7.18 per hour, well in advance of the minimum wage requirement.

All of this was made possible in part by financial support from grants through UDDC and pledges from UACS members. We want to thank UDDC for joining us in making this project such a success, and for helping us provides meaningful employment and independence for people with disabilities.

BLT... Not Just a Sandwich



The Becoming Leaders for Tomorrow (BLT) Project provides leadership, advocacy, and transition training and information for people with disabilities. It has an Advisory Committee that includes several young adults with disabilities who want to share their experiences and ideas to help other youth be successful and have an easier transition to adulthood. The BLT Project is recruiting youth and young adults, ages 13 to 30, to serve on the Advisory Committee, especially if they are on the “waiting list” for the Division of Services for People with Disabilities.

The BLT Project is also looking for youth and young adults who want to share their opinions, experiences, ideas, and talents as part of a Youth Leadership Advocacy Toolkit that will be used in training programs here in Utah and across the country. Youth can be interviewed on videotape sharing their ideas for others or they can send in poems, artwork, stories, or comments. The Toolkit will help youth learn how to be more independent, grow as leaders, and help others through advocacy.

The Toolkit builds on the experience of the BLT Project’s young adults in sharing helpful hints with parents and professionals. The “Respecting the Young Adult Patient” video, which can be found at http://blt.cpd.usu.edu/Past_Events.html, received national attention at conferences, training events, and on YouTube. Parent and professional organizations that want the BLT young adults to speak at events and share their experiences can contact the Project Coordinator, Al Romeo, at alromeo@utah.gov. The BLT Project encourages professionals, families, and youth to get involved and help young adults be as successful and independent as possible.



Fair Housing: It's not an option. It's the law.

April was Fair Housing month across the United States. This year celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the passing of the Fair Housing Amendments Act. In honor of this milestone, the Disability Law Center would like to share some information about the Fair Housing Amendments Act (FHAA).

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently released a report noting that they received 10,154 complaints about housing discrimination during the 2007 Fiscal Year. Disability and race continue to be the most common forms of complaints. In fact, 43% of all the complaints received by HUD were disability-related, with race following closely with 37% of complaints.¹

It is illegal under federal and state fair housing laws to discriminate in the rental, sale or financing of housing on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, disability, family status and source of income.

For people with disabilities, the FHAA may require owners of housing facilities to make reasonable accommodations. A reasonable accommodation is an exception to a policy that gives people with disabilities equal housing opportunities. The FHAA also requires landlords to allow tenants with disabilities to make reasonable modifications to their private living space, as well as to common use areas, doors that are wide enough for wheelchairs, kitchens and bathrooms that allow a person using a wheelchair to maneuver, and other adaptable features within the units.

According to another report "*How Much Do We Know: Public Awareness of the Nation's Fair Housing Laws*" only about half of Americans know that it is illegal for landlords to refuse to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities or to permit reasonable modifications to a housing unit.

To help you along your way to fair housing here are a few other things to know:

1. It is not necessary for a tenant to tell their landlord or housing provider what disability you have.
2. If a tenant requires a reasonable accommodation or modification, it's helpful, although not necessary, to request that it be in writing.
3. Communication, communication, communication. Make sure you approach your requests for reasonable accommodations and modifications in a courteous, respectful manner. Be aware that the tenant may not know the fair housing laws and it's an opportunity for you to teach her/him about these laws.
4. If you are interested in attending a free educational training in your areas about Fair Housing please call C. Levi Webb at 1-800-662-9080 or 1-800-550-4182 (TTY) or by email at lwebb@disabilitylawcenter.org.

Discrimination under the FHA includes "a refusal to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when such accommodations may be necessary to afford [a person with a disability] an equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling." 42 U.S.C. § 3604(f)(3)(B). So long as the requested accommodation does not constitute an undue financial and administrative burden for the landlord, or fundamentally alter the nature of the housing, the landlord must provide the accommodation.

If a tenant believes they have been discriminated against and has questions about their rights, they may call the Disability Law Center at 800-662-9080. To file a complaint, a tenant may call the Utah Anti-Discrimination and Labor Division at 800-530-5090.

The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under a grant with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Government.

¹ *Fair Housing News, Fall 2007, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development*

UTAH DD COUNCIL CALENDAR FOR 2009

(Please check the UDDC website frequently for updated information)

- December 9: Executive Committee Meeting: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- February 3: **Full Council Meeting at Capitol Building: Spruce Rm.**
11:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
LCPD Legislative Reception: Capitol Rotunda,
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
- February 17: Executive Committee Meeting: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- March 10: **Full Council Meeting: 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM**
- April 14: Executive Committee Meeting: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- April 26 - 29: **Disability Policy Seminar, Washington D.C.**



Call us with your disability questions!
800.333.8824 www.accessut.org

