

The Edge News Journal

August 2008 Volume 1, Issue 7

Inside this issue:

- Edge of the World 2
- Youth learn about disabled 2
- Grant monies available 2
- Special Olympics 3
- Letter to the Editor 4



ADA celebrates another birthday



By Deborah De Vos

July 26 marked the 18th anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities Act, which legally ensures anyone with a disability would not be denied access to public places, employment, transportation and telecommunication.

Enacted in 1990 by President George H. W. Bush, ADA was about empowering the disabled with a tool that gives people living with disabilities legal recourse to address discrimination.

“When President [George H. W.] Bush signed the bill into law this country took a significant step forward,” said Mark Miller, Chairman of the board for the Disability Outreach Committee. “Disabled Americans faced

not only physical barriers in society but the attitudinal barriers as well.”

Miller said that before ADA was enacted he can remember showing up to a job interview to find that there was no elevator in the building and the office was on the second floor.

“I called up [the man I was interviewing with] for help and he did come to the top of the stairs, saw I was in a wheelchair then turned back,” Miller said. “He didn’t say a word he just ignored me and I didn’t get an opportunity to interview for a position I was qualified to do.”

But the ADA law requires businesses, employers and the government provide ramps, lifts or elevators and other accommodations to give people living with disabilities the same access as everyone else.

Since its enactment the law has stimulated modifications to buses, stores, restaurants, theaters and telephones for people living with hearing impairment.

“If that happened to me today I would have an avenue for recourse,” Miller said, adding that he’s not the kind of guy who sues people. “But I had just as much right to interview as anyone else.”



National Parks passes are available

Did you know that if you have a permanent disability you are eligible for a free lifetime entrance pass that can get you into most national parks, monuments, historic sites, national wildlife refuges and recreation areas?

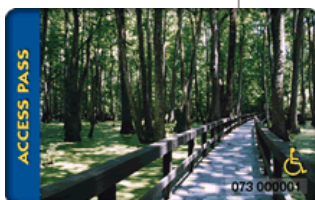
They’re called the

“America the Beautiful” pass and you can get yours in person at national parks and sites.

Besides breezing you through the gates, the pass can also provide a 50 percent discount on some expanded amenity fees charged for

things like camping, swimming and specialized interpretive services.

You can find more information at <http://www.utah.com/nationalsites/fees.htm>



The edge of the world

By Mark Miller

The Disability Outreach Committee (DOC) announced on Aug. 1 the addition of a new page to their website called "The Edge of The World."

The page is dedicated to the many friends and readers of The Edge News Journal across the globe who have submitted stories to us in the last few months through our Myspace account at www.myspace.com/disabilityoutreach.

"Our goal with this website addition is the same as our goal with The Edge News Journal [and that is] to create a forum for the disabled to access news and information that impacts

their lives" said Deborah De Vos writer and editor of The Edge. "It offers readers more of a global look at issues involving the disabled."

DOC's Vice Chairman Lowell Taylor commented that "this worldwide interest in The Edge proves that this type of news reporting is needed today," he said. "DOC will continue to support projects that will bring the news involving the disabled to everyone, like The Edge and it's focus on the Salt lake Valley."

The page was added to the website to handle the influx of stories being e-mailed in.

"The stories were inspirational biographies as well as relevant issues involving the disabled and we just felt that they were too good to ignore," said De Vos. "So we wanted to publish them somewhere for all to read, share and connect with others living with disabilities."

But Taylor said the page will not be used to support political candidates or agendas and each story will be reviewed and approved by DOC's board of directors before being posted.

Stories chosen will remain on the page for 30 days or longer depending on the availability of new stories and links will be



DOC opens a new forum on the web in order to share more stories of people living outside of Salt Lake County.

provided to other websites that give good information on a myriad of topics.

Magna youth learn about the disabled

By Mark Miller



Dustin Hamp tries out the obstacle course designed to show participants what it's like to live with a disability.

What is it really like to be in a wheelchair?

That was one question asked by a Magna youth group when the Disability Outreach Committee held a educational forum on July 17 to give area youth the opportunity to learn what its like for someone who lives with a disability.

Chairman of the Board for DOC, Mark Miller, who lives with Cerebral Palsey was asked by youth parents to speak at the event.

The groups Organizer, Lyndee White said that it was designed to better prepare their children for one of their peers who was expected to be confined to a wheelchair soon.

"We wanted the youth in our [community] to be a little bit more sensitive to her needs and the way that she might be feeling," said White. "Maybe show her a little bit more respect and courtesy."

The focus was to demonstrate how most people living with disabilities want to do as much as they can on their own before getting help.

"I liked the question and answer [time] the best. It was informative [because] I learned how to ask [if] people need help," said BriAnne Crosby, youth attendee. "I didn't really [think about] that before."

Those in attendance also had the opportunity to take a seat in a wheelchair and maneuver through a makeshift obstacle course in the parking lot.

The result was a better understanding of what it's like to live with a disability.

"[The chair] was kinda fun for the moment but I wouldn't want to do it for my whole life," said youth attendee, Marcus Bryce; adding that the hardest thing about it was "trying to get up the curb [without a curb cut]."

White said she was pleased with the outcome because "those that were here got a taste of what it [is] like to be in a wheelchair and how to treat people in chairs," she said.

Money available to pay for child healthcare

By Deborah De Vos

UnitedHealth care Children's Foundation (UHCCF) announced that new grants are available to help children who need critical health care treatment, services or equipment not covered or not fully covered by their parents' health benefit plans.

UHCCF provides grants to families to help pay for child health care services such as speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy sessions, prescriptions and medical equipment such as wheelchairs, orthotics and eyeglasses.

"The UnitedHealth care Children's Foundation has already helped more than 375 families and provided nearly \$1 million in financial assistance," said Matt Peterson, UHCCF president. "We are excited about the expansion of the program and look forward to the opportunity to help many more children have access to health care services that will enhance their health and quality of life."

Parents and legal guardians may

apply for grants of up to \$5,000 for child medical services and equipment by completing an online application at www.uhccf.org.

To be eligible for grants, children must be 16 years of age or younger and families must meet economic guidelines, which includes reside in the United States and be covered by a commercial health benefit plan.

Some of the services covered by UHCCF grants include speech therapy, physical therapy and psychotherapy sessions, medical equipment such as braces, hearing aids and eyeglasses, wheelchairs and orthodontia and dental treatments.

"We are taking action to improve access to health care in America and are dedicated to helping more children and families this year and beyond," said Peterson. "We encourage families who need assistance paying for their child's medical needs to visit the UnitedHealth care Children's Foundation website and apply today."

The foundation aims to help more children by increasing awareness of the foundation through fundraising events, partnerships, newspaper and web advertising and a revamped multimedia website, www.uhccf.org.

UHCCF was incorporated in Maryland on May 25, 1999 and expanded in Jan. 2006 to all 50 states. They are a public charity that operates independently from UnitedHealthcare with its own board of directors and supported principally by UnitedHealth Group and its employees, but they also look for individual and corporate donations to help provide assistance.

Tax-deductible donations can be made online and donors can designate funds to be used in the region where they reside or the unspecified donations will be divided equally among the regions.



Athletes celebrate their accomplishments.

Special Olympics

The Special Olympics celebrated its 40th anniversary on July 20, offering 30 Olympic-type individual and team sports that provide meaningful training and competition opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities. Information about Utah's own Special Olympics Program can be found at <http://www.specialolympics.org>.

Special Olympics currently serves 2.5 million people with intellectual disabilities in more than 200 programs in over 180 countries, including more than 500,000 athletes in China, more than 210,000 in India and almost 550,000 in the United States.



Letter to the Editor



Pictured is Shanna Wilkinson and her beloved seizure dog, Holly.

The Disability Outreach Committee would like to take the time to thank all of those who donated money at Wells Fargo Bank.

The money went to help support events and projects for the disabled.

For anyone looking to continue their support of the disabled living in the Salt Lake Valley, we encourage you to donate whatever amount you can at any branch of Wells Fargo.

Make checks payable to "The Disability Outreach Committee."

~~Mark Miller

DOC Chairman



The Edge News Journal
c/o Disability Outreach
Committee
2971 South 8400 West #6
Magna, Utah 84044
www.doconthemove.org



Have you ever made one little decision that later on changed your whole life? Then you think, "What if I didn't pick this dog?" and you cringe at the very thought of it. Well little did I know that which puppy I picked would completely change my life forever.

As Holly lies by my feet I cannot imagine the past seven years without her. You see Holly is not just any ordinary Sheltie she is my life saver and without her my life would be totally lost.

Holly has the rare and miraculous ability to alert to oncoming Seizures 5-10 minutes in advanced. She is truly my guardian angel. I never dreamed in a million years that I would need a Service Dog; the thought never even crossed my mind.

I was only 17 when my life changed drastically; I had so many hopes and dreams. Holly has given me the strength and courage to still follow my dreams despite my Epilepsy.

Holly has returned the favor of me saving her life and in turn has done more than save my life but she has also given me the independence and security that I need to live a normal life.

It all started when I was 14 and was allowed to pick a puppy from my moms Champion Sheltie. This puppy would be my companion and partner in Agility, Herding and Obedience.

There was one particular puppy that was having a hard time and everyone did not think that she would make it. I didn't give up on this pup, I stayed up and watched over her making sure she nursed and assisted my mom in tube feeding her. I had a strong connection with this pup and just knew she was the one.

The other female was the pick of the litter but I just could not part with the puppy that had a hard start in life. I kept her and named her Holly (Lakepoints Holiday Greetings); we worked really hard together and grew closer to one another. At times it felt like we could read each others thoughts. We have competed in several AKC events and together as a team we have earned our HT, PT, CD, NA, NAJ, OA, OAJ, AX, AXJ, MXJ, MX, NF, OF, RN, RA, RE and RAE.

When I was 17 I started having Seizures, before I was diagnosed with epilepsy, my amazing friend started warning me that something was wrong and that I should lie down. I was having between 7-10 Grand mal seizures a day and could not function. With Holly's advanced warnings I was able to get to a safe place to have my seizure so that I did not fall on cement or near glass or have a seizure any other hazardous place.

It got to the point that I did not want to go out in public for fear of having a seizure. We did a lot of research on Service Dogs and found a place that helped train and certify Service Dogs. This place was called At Your Service Dogs, they helped us (Holly and I as a team) with how to act in public, the do's and don'ts of a service dog team, how a service dog should act, how the owner should act, they came with us for countless hours out in public and then gave us a test for our certification.

Now at the age of 21 I can always count on Holly, she is certified and comes with me everywhere. She even went on a cruise to Mexico with us last November.

We have gone and taught elementary school kids about Service Dogs and about proper care of their own pets. Holly's tricks and abilities amaze everyone that she meets.

Holly is more then just another dog; she is my life, my love, my protector, my everything. I believe everything happens for a reason and Holly was sent here to watch over me.

Holly is truly amazing and has been 100 percent accurate in predicting my seizures. Holly's amazing gift has given me a new outlook on life.