



ANNUAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

Allie Cannington's Campaign to Institute Disability History Week



"The largest minority in the United States are the 54 million people with disabilities who have a rich history which is rarely recognized. From the torture of the holocaust to their institutionalization, they have been targeted throughout history. To this day, the societal perception of disability has been filled with judgments and misguided assumptions. Just like any other minority, the disability community has had to fight for their rights and prove society's views wrong. The need for change led to their civil rights

Allie Cannington is a senior at Sir Francis Drake High School. She currently works as a Youth Advocate Intern at the Marin Center for Independent Living (MCIL). She was one of 200 high school students chosen to attend The Youth Forum for Students with Disabilities (YLF) last summer. To find out more about how you can support the Disability History Campaign or have further questions about the cause, please contact Allie at (415) 459 6245 ext. 27 or mcilal-lie@gmail.com

movement. The hard-working activists brought positive change to people with disabilities, giving them equal opportunities in the law and the workplace.

I have lived with Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a genetic brittle bone condition since birth, and had no idea there was a disability history, culture and community that ever existed. It wasn't until I attended the 2009 Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities in Sacramento that the doors to my future opened. The empowering and unforgettable five day program taught me all of the advancements that people with disabilities have been able to achieve. But I also realized there was a lot to be done. A major question posed during the forum was, "Why isn't our history, the

disability history, taught in California schools?" It was a simple question that did not have a valid answer. We then turned our frustration into a movement for change. We came to a consensus and established the Disability History Week Campaign. The goal of this campaign is for the California Legislature and Governor to proclaim a Disability History Week by July 2010. Across the state, this week will spread awareness of disability history and a general acceptance of people's differences. The follow up to this campaign will be implementing disability history into the California school curriculum. I believe, like so many others, that the outcome of this campaign will eliminate some of.....

-continued on page 4-

WHAT PERSON WITH A DISABILITY DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND WHY?



Tina Warren, H&HS Child Care Commission

"My friend Tom is someone I admire very much and who has a disability. He has Parkinson's disease and, since I have known him, his disability has impacted both his mobility and ability to communicate with others. Tom

is a doctor and worked as a podiatrist until his condition forced him to retire about 15 years ago. Following his diagnosis and retirement, Tom put his energy into helping to raise his two children and to expanding the research and medical equipment

available to Parkinson's patients. He invented a device which made it easier for Parkinson's patients to walk. He has also worked tirelessly on his own communication and mobility skills. He is a role model."

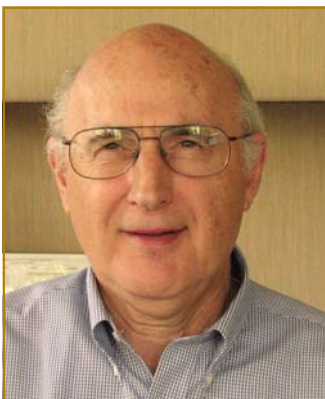


Lynn Murrin, H&HS Public Health Laboratory

"My daughter, Kristine MacMaster, is the person I most admire with a disability. Even though she spends every day in a wheel chair, she begins each day with a smile. She is coura-

geous and happy. Her daily activities include attending adult special education, outings, and being surrounded by family and friends that love her. I admire her love of life, her sweet person-

ality, and her strengths. Every day as I care for her, I think about how lucky I am to still have her. Her gifts to me are love, courage, and strength."



Jim Weber, EDD Veteran Services

"Michael Fox; I admire his openness about his disease and disability; his work in raising awareness of the possibilities for people to continue their lives and contributions; and, his fundraising and continuing

to work despite all his difficulties."

Michael J. Fox is a Canadian actor, author and voice-over artist. Fox was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 1991, and disclosed his condition to the public in 1998. Fox semi-retired from acting in 2000 as the symptoms of his disease worsened. He has since become an advocate

for research toward finding a cure. In recent years, he had guest-starred on various television shows, and appeared as himself in his Emmy-nominated prime-time special Michael J. Fox: Adventures of an Incurable Optimist (A Personal Journey of Hope) in May 2009.



WHAT PERSON WITH A DISABILITY DO YOU MOST ADMIRE AND WHY?



Bree Marchman, H&HS Children and Family Services

"My wife. She was born three months premature, and as a result her hips and back were significantly compromised. She cannot run or ride a bike, and can only walk up inclines with difficulty and

pain. Despite this, she never complains about her limitations and tries to lead as active a life as possible. She's devoted her life to working with special-needs children, and her understanding of being differently-

abled has undoubtedly informed her work. I admire her perseverance and positive attitude and the fact that she never dwells on the things she cannot do and focuses on what she can."



Monique Vasquez, H&HS Employment & Training Branch

"I have a very gifted cousin, Johnny. At the age of thirteen Johnny wrote a book. Not just any book mind you but a 300 page sci-fi novel pressed and bound! Johnny's gift does come with a price though; he has Asperger's Syndrome, a high-level functioning form of autism that carries with it some serious social developmental issues. But it

also puts him in league with some of the greatest minds throughout time such as Albert Einstein, Bill Gates, Sir Issac Newton, and Thomas Jefferson! Johnny was fortunate to have a timely diagnosis, and with proper treatment and management he has proven that a person with Asperger's actually can thrive in society. Although Johnny cannot always

mentor himself (at least he is honest - what a good thing!) and dislikes shaking people's hands, he is focused, passionate and absolutely refuses to let his autism get in the way of his dreams. Now nineteen years old, he is attending classes at UCSF and using Bart! Five years ago, I would have never thought that possible for him; I am so very proud!"



Allie—Continued from page 1

the discrimination and stigma towards disability. Each citizen, no matter their circumstance, will develop a new perspective of the disability community and admire the work it took for them to obtain their rights. After attending the Youth Organizing (YO!) Disabled and Proud Summit where a core group of youth, including myself, planned the campaign, I decided to bring the issue home to Marin County. As the Youth Advocate Intern at the Marin Center for Independent Living, I have been able to teach my local community of family, peers, teachers, and elected officials about the cause.

I have recently created the Youth Empowered Leadership group, or YEL, comprised of youth with and without disabilities who are committed to building awareness and breaking down barriers. One main focus of the group will be the Disability History Campaign. Our mission is well on its way as we have finished the first draft of the Legislative Resolution and scheduled meetings with possible legislative sponsors and educational administrators. Before this past summer, I would have never thought that I could be a part of such an incredible cause. As this

year continues, I hope to gain support for this civil rights issue due to the immense positive change it will have on the state of California. By acknowledging and embracing our history, individuals with disabilities will have the chance to feel a sense of pride for who they are. I have no doubts that with the right support this campaign can eradicate many of the negative connotations of disability and create a common understanding that disability is not an inability but an attribute that can have a positive impact on the individual and the greater community."



Twenty-three states, including New York, Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts and Washington are already implementing Disability History Week. During an established Disability History Week, states will require their public school to infuse instruction and activities related to disability history into the existing school curriculum.

You can help implement Disability History Week in California. During Disability History Week, students will have an opportunity to learn about how people with disabilities were instrumental in changing history, and how they became active participants in changing societal attitudes about their needs, desires and capabilities. By teaching disability history in schools, we are taking the necessary steps to ensure that history is not repeated and that there continues to be movement towards an even more accessible society in future generations.

Originating by proclamation of President Truman in 1945, Disability Awareness began as a week-long effort to assist disabled American Veterans. It has been expanded in scope to include all persons with disabilities in order to support their efforts to achieve equal opportunity in employment and to highlight their talent, potential and contributions in the workplace.