



IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL!

Sandy Hanebrink, OTR/L  
[wheeldogs.com](http://wheeldogs.com)

## 3rd International Rare Neuroimmunologic Disorders Symposium Friday, July 18, 2008

### *Self Advocacy and Employment with Disabilities*

#### **ADVOCACY**

Advocacy is a set of hands-on technical skills and practices needed to effectively press for change.

Advocacy is the foundation of active citizenship, a process through which ordinary people learn to participate in decision making at all levels.

Advocacy is identifying priorities, crafting a strategy, stepping forward, taking action, and achieving results which are critical steps to finding one's voice, making oneself heard, and shaping one's future.

Successful Advocacy is when people are empowered with the dignity and confidence to act and a world of possibilities opens up.

[Institute for Sustainable Communities, Advocacy and Leadership  
Center [http://www.iscvt.org/what\\_we\\_do/advocacy\\_and\\_leadership\\_center/](http://www.iscvt.org/what_we_do/advocacy_and_leadership_center/) ]

#### **SELF ADVOCACY AND EMPLOYMENT**

Advocates must look at the whole picture and ask critical questions:

##### **Self assessment**

- ✓ Health
  - Current condition, limits and abilities  
(Common issues: Fatigue, mobility, coordination and balance, weakness, depression, cognitive symptoms and others)
  - Everyday Expenses
  - Needs
- ✓ Basic Needs
  - Housing
  - Food
  - Clothing
  - Household Expenses
- ✓ Education/Training
- ✓ Work Experience
- ✓ Work goals
- ✓ Availability

- Of Work
- To Work
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Current Supports & Costs
- ✓ Needed Supports & Costs
- ✓ Current Benefits
  - SSI
  - SSDI
  - Medicaid
  - Medicare
  - Insurance
  - Other
- ✓ Current Income & Resources

### **Health Advocacy**

Health advocacy is critical. If you are not healthy and cannot stay healthy, you cannot work or stay gainfully employed.

- ✓ Self—let your needs be known
  - Inform doctors & providers
  - Communicate with insurance
  - Ask questions
  - Learn as much as you can
    - YOU ARE HERE—Great Start!!!
- ✓ Self & TM
  - Educate your healthcare providers
    - Share TMA Journal
      - ✓ Give to your physicians
      - ✓ Give to your area ER departments
    - Communicate your Experiences
  - Promote Research
    - Grass roots efforts-email representatives
    - Support Groups
    - Fund Raising for Project Restore and TMA

### **Education & Training**

- ✓ Primary Education
- ✓ Post Secondary Education
- ✓ Vocational Training
  - State VR Departments (Not a one shot deal)
    - Transition
    - Pre-Employment
    - Employment
    - Post-Employment
    - Re-Employment
  - School Voc training
  - Employment Networks
- ✓ Specialized Training
- ✓ Continuing Education & Certifications

### **Transition to Work**

- ✓ School to Work
- ✓ Post illness to Work

- To previous job
- To new job

**Work-** Things to think about...

✓ Social Security

- SSI
  - Income/Resources \$2000/\$3000 couple
  - 2008 Benefit \$637 /\$956 couple
  - Following is a list of states that supplement the basic SSI amount with a link to more information about that state:
    - [California](#)
    - [Hawaii](#)
    - [Massachusetts](#)
    - [Nevada](#)
    - [New Jersey](#)
    - [New York](#)
    - [Pennsylvania](#)
    - [Rhode Island](#)
    - [Vermont](#)
    - [Washington D.C.](#)
    - Other states administer their own supplemental payments. In those states, you must apply for the supplement at the state agency.

If you get SSI, you also may be able to get other help from your state or county. For example, you may be able to get Medicaid, food stamps, or some other social services. For information about all the services available in your community, call your local social services department or public welfare office.

- Earnings=\$85 exempt then \$2 earned less \$1 benefits
- **Students with disabilities**— Do not count up to \$1,550 of your earnings a month in 2008 (maximum of \$6,240 for 2008) when they compute your SSI payment amount if you are under age 22 and go to school or are in a training program on a regular basis.)
- SSDI
  - SGA \$940/Blind SGA\$1570
- 9 Trial Work Months (\$670)
- IRWE
- Subsidy
- PASS
- Ticket
- EXR-Expedited Reinstatement

✓ Insurance

- Medicaid
- Medicare
- Private
  - Pre-existing Conditions
  - COBRA

- ✓ Paid
  - Maintaining previous or current employment
  - Part time
  - Full time
  - Stipends
- ✓ Unpaid
  - Barter system
  - Volunteer
- ✓ Disclosure
- ✓ Reasonable Accommodations
  - Modifications
  - Assistive Technology

## **RESOURCES**

**Transverse Myelitis Association** <http://www.myelitis.org/index.html>

**TM Center at Johns Hopkins** <http://www.hopkinsneuro.org/tm/>

**Jim Lubin's disABILITY Information and Resources** <http://www.makoa.org/index.htm>

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**ABLEDATA Informed Consumer's Guide to Funding Assistive Technology** [http://www.abledata.com/abledata\\_docs/funding.htm](http://www.abledata.com/abledata_docs/funding.htm)

### **American Association of People with Disabilities**

**ADA Access Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkadaaccess.php>

**Adaptive Mobility Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkadaptmobile.php>

**Advocacy Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkadvocacy.php>

**Assistive Technology Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkassisttech.php>

**Associations & Organizations** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkassociationsorg.php>

**Complaints-Don't get mad do something** <http://www.aapd.com/docs/complaints.php>

**Disability Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkdisabilities.php>

**Education Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkeducation.php>

**Employment Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkemploy.php>

**Family Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkfamilies.php>

**Glossary of Government Terms** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkglossary.php>

**Housing Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkhousing.php>

**International Resources** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkinternational.php>

**Scholarships & Awards** <http://www.aapd.com/links/linkscholarshipawards.php>

### **The American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center**

AIDTAC provides information and technical assistance to American Indian tribes and Alaskan Native villages that helps their members with disabilities live healthy, integrated lives within their communities. <http://aidtac.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/>

**Americas Job Bank** On-line Job Network and electronic resume service for Employers seeking qualified applicants and individuals seeking jobs. 1-877-US-2JOBS (1-877-872-5627) 1-877-889-5627 (TTY) <http://www.ajb.dni.us/>

**Americans Jobline**® An accessible job bank and electronic resume service (an audio version of Americas Job Bank) operated by the National Federation for the Blind under a contract with the US Department of Labor. To access Jobline®, call 1-800-414-5748 <http://www.nfb.org/jobline/enter.htm>

**Creating Futures** The Creating Futures program provides components to build a qualified and diverse workforce. Through the program, transitioning U.S. Veterans, individuals with disabilities, youth-at-risk and dislocated workers are given opportunities to build life long, productive and rewarding careers in IT. [http://www.creatingfutures.us/creating\\_futures.aspx](http://www.creatingfutures.us/creating_futures.aspx)  
[foundation@comptia.org](mailto:foundation@comptia.org)

**Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC)** <http://www.dbtac.vcu.edu/index.html>

**Disability Champions@Work Online** <http://www.daveparr.co.uk/dc/frames.htm>

**Disability Government Information** <http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=500>

**Disability Resources Monthly Guide (DRM) to Disability Resources on the Internet** <http://www.disabilityresources.org/AT-FUNDING.html>

**DisabilityWORK.com** <http://www.disabilitywork.com/>

**Guide for Employers: How to Recruit, Interview, Hire and Accommodate People with Disabilities** [http://spot.pcc.edu/~rjacobs/career/new\\_page\\_1.htm](http://spot.pcc.edu/~rjacobs/career/new_page_1.htm)

**IAADP-International Association of Assistance Dog Partners** <http://www.iaadp.org/iaadp-membership-application.html>

**Job Accommodation Network** (800) 526-7234 (Voice) (800) 526-7234 (TTY) <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/>

**“Monster” Managing the Business of Disability at Work** <http://career-advice.monster.com/workers-with-disabilities/workers-with-disabilities/Managing-the-Business-of-Disability/home.aspx>

**ONE STOP--National Center on Workforce and Disability**

The National Center on Workforce and Disability/Adult is a resource for One-Stop Career Centers, state and local Workforce Investment Boards, and policymakers to enable them to increase employment outcomes for people with disabilities.

617-287-4345 (V) 617-287-4350 (TTY) 1-888-886-9898 Information-on-Demand service <http://www.onestops.info/>

**RESNA Projects** <http://www.resna.org/projects/index.php>

### **Small Business Administration**

Outreach to individuals with disabilities interested in starting their own business.  
(202) 205-6706 [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

### **Social Security Administration**

Information on eligibility for Social Security and listings for your local office.  
(800) 772-1213 (Voice) (800) 325-0778 (TTY) <http://www.ssa.gov/work>

**USAJOBS.gov** <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/>

### **Workplace Access Guide**

This site offers detailed information and hands-on examples of how to make workplaces accessible to everyone, including individuals with hearing- and vision-related disabilities. You can find specific information to resolve your problems--or get a helpful overview of disability accommodations your company can put to good use. [www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/accessforall](http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/accessforall)

**Worksupport.com** <http://www.worksupport.com/resources/viewContent.cfm/626>

### **Worksupport.com SSA Self Advocacy**

**Information** <http://www.worksupport.com/documents/witn1.pdf>

## **ADVOCAY OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Current Issues that may affect you:**

**ADA Restoration Act**  
**Medicare In-Home Restrictions**  
**Medicare Therapy Caps**  
**Stem Cell Research**  
**The Elections--VOTE**

### **Ways to become involved:**

**Project Restore** <http://www.hopkinsneuro.org/restore/>

**Transverse Myelitis Association** <http://www.myelitis.org/index.html>

### **Contact your Representatives and find out about current bills and laws:**

**Library of Congress THOMAS** <http://www.thomas.gov/>

**House of Representatives** <http://www.house.gov/>

**Senate** <http://www.senate.gov/>

**U. S. Access Board** -Accessibility For People With Disabilities. <http://www.access-board.gov/>

**American Association of People with Disabilities Policy Positions & Activities** <http://www.aapd-dc.org/policies/indexpolicy.php>

**AAPD-Disability Mentoring Day** <http://www.dmd-aapd.org/>

**The Disability Rights Activist** Updates on legislation and legal cases impacting people with disabilities. [www.disrights.org](http://www.disrights.org)

**Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund** <http://www.dredf.org/>

**FedLaw**

List of federal laws addressing individuals with disabilities and links.  
[www.legal.gsa.gov/legal6a.htm](http://www.legal.gsa.gov/legal6a.htm)

**Health and Disability Advocates** (formerly the SSI Coalition for a Responsible Safety Net) HAD seeks to assure that low-income older adults, children and adults with disabilities lead secure and dignified lives. HDA advocates for policies that promote economic security and provide health coverage. (312) 223-9600  
[www.hdadvocates.org/](http://www.hdadvocates.org/)

**ITEM Coalition** (Independence Through Enhancement of Medicare and Medicaid) <http://www.itemcoalition.org/>

**National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)**  
(800) 695-0285 [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

**Searchable Federal Register**

The Federal Register is the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations (including grants), as well as executive orders and other presidential documents. <http://www.access.gpo.gov>

**User First Alliance** <http://www.usersfirst.org/index.html>

**Thank you all for this opportunity and special thanks to**

