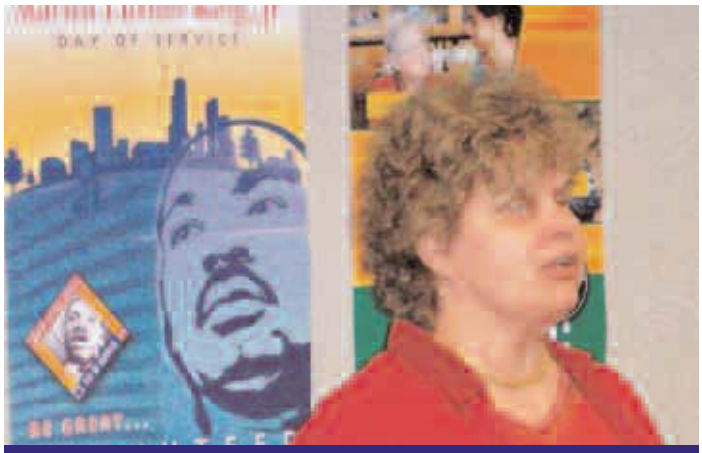
Our Invitation

INCLUSION NETWORK

Please join us in our quest to inspire, support and celebrate inclusion in Greater Cincinnati

Fall 2005

Cincinnati Bell Funds Support For Service Learning Initiative



Peg Gutsell speaks to area teachers

Each summer, the Mayerson Foundation gathers 50 area teachers to help develop service learning strategies for their pool of more than 1000 students. Through consultant Steve Elliott, the Foundation continues to work with schools throughout the year to create dynamic and effective student volunteer programs.

This year, thanks to funding from Cincinnati Bell, the Inclusion Network has stepped up to partner with Steve in encouraging and helping service coordinators to involve students with disabilities. In addition to Peg Gutsell speaking at the workshop, the Inclusion Network will be available to assist schools in a variety of ways including the recruiting of students with disabilities, matching those students to particular tasks, and identifying accessible volunteer opportunities.

"More often than not, people with disabilities are service recipients rather than contributors. Flipping things upside down so that students with disabilities can be contributors offers new possibilities for people to learn about themselves, one another, and how to work together," said Peg. "The kinds of relationships that can be developed through collaboration have the potential to impact important policy decisions and, ultimately, the life of a community."

Local Accessible Travel Just Got More Affordable, And Convenient

Until recently, if you are someone with a disability (particularly a mobility disability) who doesn't drive, about your only option for accessible transportation was the Metro or Access. Neither of which, don't operate 24 hours a day, don't go to all destinations, and aren't practical for all destinations.

Now, under the leadership of the Inclusion Network, a public-private partnership has created for the very first time a convenient, affordable, more timely and private transportation option for people with disabilities. The effort is a pilot program that will run through January 5, 2006.

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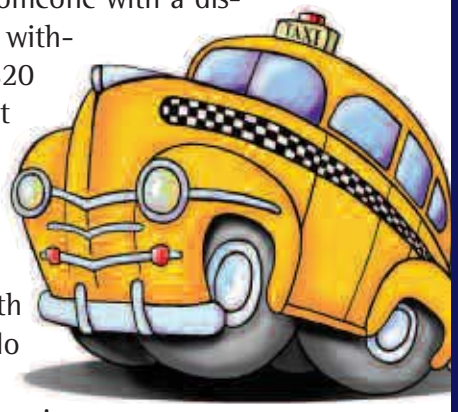
Save the Date!

The 11th Annual Inclusion Leadership Awards Event is scheduled for March 8, 2006 at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center. Due to construction at the Cincinnati Convention Center, this year's Event will be held in Covington. We are now accepting nominations. For more information, please see full story on page 4.

Local Accessible Travel (continued)

United Transportation, a local transportation provider, working with Procter & Gamble, Cincinnati City Council member David Pepper, Metro, and us, has reduced its fares on wheelchair-lift-equipped van service for those with disabilities living or working within the I-275 loop north of the Ohio River.



One way cost for someone with a disability is a flat $12 within Cincinnati and $20 outside the City but within the I-275 loop. One additional companion and children under 12 can ride free with the paying adult. No planning ahead is required. The new service is just a phone call away, 24 hours a day/365 days a year. It's door-to-door and the drivers can assist passengers with packages or folding grocery carts. Similar to calling a cab, passengers can count on direct service from pick-up to their destination.

"I'm very pleased to have such a service available. It is going to make life a whole lot easier for many people who live and visit here," said Joel Kahn, section manager-global analytics for Procter & Gamble and member of this planning team. "As a member of national and state committees that involve people in wheelchairs, I can now host meetings in Cincinnati without fear that our guests will have problems getting around."

United's owner, Adrienne Barkley, also has a personal interest in wanting this to succeed. "I have a relative with a disability so I know first hand how challenging it can be for someone with mobility issues to get around. I think there's a huge need for a service like this and I'm glad that I'm able to offer it."

To make a reservation for this service, you can contact United at 513-742-3075.

What is an Inclusion Audit?

Quite simply, an inclusion audit is a form of specialized consultation services provided by the Inclusion Network that offers valuable feedback and suggestions to businesses and organizations as they relate to creating a welcoming environment for people with disabilities. Audit consultants can review and discuss entire organizations, construction projects, or specific areas of interest. Areas of focus can include programs or services, personnel policies, meetings and community events, emergency and rescue procedures, information and communication strategies, parking and exterior paths of travel, customer service policy and/or training, or office and building space.

"Many times what we find with organizations for whom we've conducted audits, is that when a program, service or new building is designed in such a way as to exclude certain people, it often is simply because people just weren't aware that they were doing it. We recognize that there may be limitations based upon many factors; however, we work together with our clients to explore possibilities and take steps to be consciously welcoming," said Peg Gutsell, Inclusion Network co-director.

For more information about how your organization or business may benefit from an inclusion audit, please call us at 513-345-1330. Thanks to funding from the City of Cincinnati Department of Community Development; the Jacob G. Schmidlap Trust, Fifth Third Bank Trustee; and the Cinergy Foundation, the Inclusion Network is able to offer discounts to area non-profit organizations.

What is inclusion? Inclusion is people with disabilities and people without disabilities participating together in all life activities – at school, at work, at home, at worship, and in the community.

Thanks to Inclusion Network, New Art Academy Welcomes Everyone

This summer Cincinnati's Mecca for artistic talent, Over-the-Rhine was given another boost when the Art Academy of Cincinnati opened the doors to its new $13 million, attention grabbing facility. Featuring dramatic architectural lines and colors, spaces and lighting, its two buildings boast 120,000 square feet for instructional studios, academic classrooms, students studios, and meeting and exhibition spaces.

However, some features that you may not notice, but that are important just the same, are the varying counter heights at the front reception desk, the power doors, and the lower electrical outlets. These are just some of the planning changes that were made as a result of an inclusion audit by the Inclusion Network.

"Our other facility wasn't accessible at all, and making this new Academy welcoming to everyone was a priority for us," said Gregory Allgire Smith, president of the Art Academy.

Our Sandy Kerlin began working with Greg, the Art Academy's architect and construction company at the very initial stages of development. She reviewed architectural plans, toured the site, and asked lots of questions. Everything from signage to parking, from floor space to colors were looked at from the perspective of accessibility. There were many considerations that Sandy brought to their attention (and others that she affirmed they were already planning correctly). Because she was brought in early to the project, many of those recommendations were made with minimal additional cost.

"I'm very glad that we worked with the Inclusion Network. The experience has been extremely beneficial in terms of how we and the building will be responsive to those who study, teach and visit here," said Greg.

Volunteer Profile: Marvin Moss

At 57, Marvin Moss has an infectious passion. When he believes whole heartedly in an issue, he's not shy about letting you know and he's definitely not shy about stepping up to go to bat for it. In fact, you may just find yourself following his lead.

It's no wonder this advocacy specialist for The ARC Hamilton County (an agency Marvin's mother started in the 1940s) can be found at the helm of many local causes surrounding matters of human rights. Whether it's serving on Boards, participating on committees, or speaking at functions, he lets his voice be heard.

Marvin is a member of the TRAN Committee that is looking into transportation solutions for people with disabilities, and a conference planning committee for People First of Ohio 2006. He is also a Board member of Advocacy and Protective Services Inc. that serves people who have mental retardation but don't have a guardian, and an advisory board member of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging with Developmental Disabilities in Illinois.

With so many other obligations, the Inclusion Network is very fortunate to have him as one of our volunteers as well. For more than four years he's been involved with our Voting Task Force, helping to register people with disabilities, and has also represented us when we've had our booth at area events (our annual Inclusion Leadership Awards Event being one of them).

"Marvin brings so much to the table," said Peg Gutsell, co-director. "His unique combination of life experiences as a person with a disability and commitment to issues of inclusion is a wonderful asset to our organization."

When asked why he volunteers, he said, the reason is simple. "If I do one good deed a day, I'm happy."

Inclusion Network Looking For Nominations

Once again, it's that time of year when we reach out to the community to find examples of those who embrace inclusion. Do you know of an organization or an individual who welcomes and includes everyone? Please let us know.

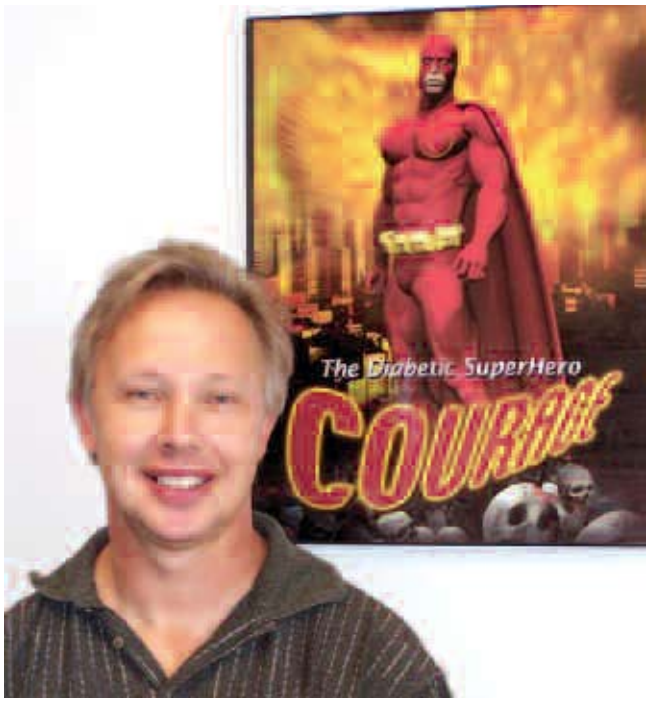
We're accepting nominations for our 11th annual Inclusion Leadership Awards Event through November 4, 2005. The selected Award recipients will be honored at our Inclusion Leadership Awards Event on March 8, 2006 at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center. They'll also be featured in videos and other publicity.

If you'd like to see examples of inclusion leadership, please call us for profiles of past honorees. You'll find last year's honoree profiles on our Web site, www.inclusion.org.

You can download a nomination form from our Web site, or call us and we'll be glad to get you one.

Behringer-Crawford Museum
first recognized in 2002

Inclusion Is Important To Me: Bob Kelly



For Bob Kelly, now an accomplished animator and artist, reading has always been a challenge. His mind, he said, just moves too fast. Luckily for him, he had a wonderful teacher who taught him that he didn't need to read every word so long as he got the basics down.

"I was learning about inclusion without even realizing it," said Bob. "I didn't even find out I had a learning disability until I was 45, I just figured I was given the talent of doing things creatively."

When Bob's son, Matthew was also diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (A.D.D.), Bob developed a language arts computer program to teach Matthew about sentence structures. With engaging graphics and pop up screens, Matthew learned all about conjunctions and verbs in just four sessions. The 3-D action packed game, involved quick response and reaction time, and, when everything was answered correctly, a knight slaying dragon appeared on the screen.

Five years ago, Bob created 'Courage' the diabetic super hero, named after and created for his other son who has diabetes. The comic strip actually isn't about super powers, but is aimed at taking the scare out of diabetes for children. It also teaches them about staying healthy, injections, and the pump. The book is now a project of the Juvenile Diabetes Association, and the Web site www.thehumanelement.com/courage was voted one of the top 10 Web sites in Cincinnati.

Bob is in the process of starting a new company called Minds Odyssey to develop alternative methods of teaching children with A.D.D. or other disabilities.

"All children need to be included in the same educational system for enrichment. The challenge is to find alternative ways to keep them included because children like Matthew and Joshua have gifts, they just need to be tapped into differently," said Bob. "I'm driven by the successes of children and I want to dedicate the rest of my life to that."

Lakota Early Childhood Center
first recognized in 2000

St. Anthony's Church
first recognized in 1999

Assistance Dogs Aren't Just For People With Visual Impairments

According to Assistance Dogs International, it is estimated that more than 1000 assistance dogs were placed nationally in 2004 – and less than half are guide dogs (for people with visual problems). Nearly 300 are hearing or signal dogs for people who are Deaf or who have a hearing loss. More than 400 are service dogs that include seizure alert or seizure response dogs, dogs trained to alert diabetic owners of imminent danger, dogs trained in retrieval for people who have mobility issues, or psychiatric assistance dogs who will get their partner's medicine in a case of emergency. There are also therapy or facility dogs that are placed in residential facilities to provide emotional support to people.

When You Meet Someone With An Assistance Dog...

- Talk to the person and avoid running up to, playing with, talking to or petting the dog. You may actually be putting the person in danger. Remember, the dog is working and may have difficulty concentrating if it is distracted.

- Avoid asking sensitive questions of the person such as why he/she has the dog or what the dog does for him/her.

- If you think that the service dog is being treated cruelly, think again. The reality is service dogs probably have a better life than most. Animals enjoy being challenged and stimulated mentally, and they especially enjoy having the opportunity to being with their companion during much of the day (instead of being left alone).

- It is OK to tell the person his/her dog is beautiful.

Local Airport Screeners Now Better Prepared

While most would agree that in a post 9/11 world, airport screenings are a necessity, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has still become the agency travelers love to hate. Let'sface it, long delays in getting through airport gates and being poked or prodded aren't exactly enjoyable experiences. For people with a disability (and who may use an assistance dog), that experience may be even more uncomfortable if TSA screeners don't know how to communicate with or treat them.

However, thanks to a concerned group of volunteers with disabilities and TSA staff, traveling has become less stressful for those flying out of the Greater Cincinnati International (CVG) and Dayton International Airports.

It all began this past spring when Cassandra Clark, CVG TSA training coordinator, invited Partners of Assistance Dogs (P.A.D.) Network. Cassandra wanted to collaborate with them in an effort to educate screeners about the needs and wants of people with disabilities particularly relating to the TSA policies, and to educate travelers about how they can better prepare for airport travel. Through a series of exchanged presentations, PowerPoints, and hands-on training, everyone walked away with greater awareness and more patience.

William Wiggins Jr. from the Dayton International Airport, who attended one of the presentations, later invited the P.A.D. Network to speak to his staff as well. As a direct result, Dayton instituted a new policy. It has long been required that owners must take their animals outside the building (and outside the security screening) when relieving them, which meant having to wait in potentially long security lines to get back to the terminals. Now when this happens, the Dayton International Airport gives partners of assistance dogs a pass that allows them access to the head of those lines.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for everyone and we're very appreciative to the TSA in Greater Cincinnati and Dayton for wanting to make the effort to understand how they can best serve everyone who uses the airport," said Barbara Burton, P.A.D. Network coordinator.

Network's Katie Maly Speaks At National Down Syndrome Society Conference

Did you know the Inclusion Network has employed a nationally recognized speaker? Katie Maly, who works for us every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, traveled to California earlier this summer to speak at the National Down Syndrome Society Conference about what it means to her to be a self-advocate.

"Being a self-advocate means having a responsibility to do my part to make our community a better place. I think it is important for all persons with Down syndrome to have a voice. It means that I have learned to speak for myself about the things that are important to me," she told the 500 plus audience.

For Katie, that also means having and enjoying her independence – including paying her own rent and electric bills. From her apartment in bustling Hyde Park, she's on the bus bright and early every day to get in her work outs at the YMCA before heading off to her other job as a mail clerk at Great American Insurance Company.

"I'm so glad to have these opportunities. Sometimes its scary trying new things but that is how we learn and become confident," she continued. "Sometimes we choose to try new thing, like moving into my apartment, sometimes we are forced to try new things, like getting a new boss. Sometimes we can just enjoy the things that stay the same like our family and friends, but as a self-advocate I can say I will be okay because I belong to a family and community."

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