

## Memorandum

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**To:** The Honorable Mayor Azari and Members of City Council  
**From:** The Commission on Disability  
**Date:** January 25, 1999  
**Subject:** 1998 Commission on Disability Report

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The following is a summary of the Commission on Disability's accomplishments and activities throughout the year.

- **Building Review Board**

In its continuing participation with the City's Building Review Board the Commission reviewed an appeal for a variance by P&B Partnership. The Commission's recommendations were:

1. In regards to the CARE Housing units, support the contractor's provision to make all ground floor units (12) according to Type A specifications as outlined in the 1997 UBC.
2. For the other 56 units provided by P&B, recommend that this project be constructed in accordance with the 1997 UBC (i.e., 2% of total number of units by Type A) and include the 14% state requirements according to C.R.S. 9-5-112.

The members agreed that there is a high demand for low-income housing such as those provided by CARE housing, especially among the population of disabled citizens. The Commission wanted the Building Review Board and the contractor to understand that these recommendations reflect a major concession by reducing the number of Type A units from 24 (as required under the current 1991 UBC) to 8 (under the 1997 UBC and state requirements).

- **Resources for Disabled Students**

Rose Kreston, Director of Resources for Disabled Students (RDS), CSU met with the Commission and gave a brief background about RDS has done and is doing (as follows):

- operates as a support service for students with disabilities to make sure the students have access to the things and places they need
- ensures "program access" versus "physical access"
- provides testing services, note-taking services, etc.
- provides services that are individually supported
- promotes advocacy and awareness (disability awareness events held each March; review CSU building plans; work with CSU parking management; etc.

- created a committee of students who work to raise funds which they decide how to use towards improving or addressing the needs of students with disabilities (i.e., elevators, automatic doors, etc.)
- (does not) reach out to students with disabilities. If a student needs their assistance, the student must approach the office themselves and request assistance.
- over 600 students have “self-identified” and utilize the services of RDS

In regards to physical access, the campus will never be fully accessible, according to Ms. Kreston. However, she does feel that CSU is responsive to issues concerning disabilities and are doing the best they feel they can with what they are able. The Commission can assist RDS by encouraging students to contact the office if they truly need assistance.

- **Disability Awareness Around the Community**

**Special Olympics:** On May 12th, Commission members Alan Apt and Kathy Lassen, along with Blair Leist and Deputy City Manager Diane Jones met with Don Unger, Superintendent of Poudre School District (PSD) and several PSD staff members. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss PSD's interest and ability to formally recognize the accomplishments of Special Olympians. As Kathy Lassen explained, several school districts throughout the nation, including Weld County (i.e., Greeley Central), have implemented programs in which Special Olympians earn points towards their athletic “letters”. Although PSD has some concerns regarding the logistics of this effort they are supportive and have committed to exploring ways in which to make this effort successful. As a result of this meeting, a partnership has been created between the local chapter of Special Olympics and PSD with the sole purpose of providing varying levels of recognition for Special Olympians.

**Art Contest:** Also discussed with PSD, on May 12th, was the concept of an art contest among PSD students. The general consensus among PSD staff is that art contests often require a great deal of commitment from teachers and for that reason were hesitant to support the idea. Once they realized that the contest would not be officially sanctioned by PSD they were more open to the idea. No direction or formal decisions regarding the art contest were developed.

**Disability Awareness Program:** On May 19th a meeting was held at the City of Fort Collins regarding disability awareness. The meeting was attended by Keith Miser, Vice President, Colorado State University; Don Unger, Superintendent, Poudre School District; Eric Reno, Vice President, Front Range Community College; Frank Lancaster, Larimer County Manager; Commission on Disability members Kathy Lassen, Don Fish, and Initha Stuckey, and, Blair Leist, City Manager's Office, City of Fort Collins. The meeting successfully served as the first step in a focused approach to creating disability awareness throughout the community. As evidenced by statements made at the meeting, disability awareness activities are occurring at varying degrees. The community at large, however, is often unaware of these activities. The goal of the meeting therefore, was to establish a working partnership to ensure publicity and coordination of these efforts as well as to create additional awareness activities.

In order to make this happen, meeting participants decided to form a committee made up of members from each of the representative organizations. These members include: Rose Kreston, Disabled Students Office, Colorado State University; Joe Henrickson, Poudre School District; Betsy Craig and John Feeley, Front Range Community College; Deni LaRue, Public Information Officer, Larimer County; Kathy Lassen (or current chair) Chair, Commission on Disability; and, Blair Leist, City Manager's Office, City of Fort Collins. This committee may also be expanded to include Public Information Officers from each of the organizations. In addition, each organization has prepared a list of their planned, or on-going, disability awareness activities and forwarded them to the City.

**City Council Presentation to Special Olympians:** The Commission sponsored a plaque and recognition by Mayor Ann Azari at the City Council meeting in October. The purpose of the recognition was to publicly celebrate the winning of gold medals by two Fort Collins' Special Olympic baseball teams; the Fort Collins Eagles and the Fort Collins Blue Jays. These teams competed in a statewide event held August 15 and 16 at the Foothills Softball Complex in Lakewood, Colorado. Four hundred and fifty athletes from across the state competed in tennis, cycling, boccie and softball. Teams had to qualify in regional competitions to be eligible for this event.

The softball competition consisted of 30 teams competing in 4 divisions. The two Fort Collins teams competed in Unified Softball, which is athletes with and without disabilities training and competing together. Both Fort Collins' teams, won gold medals in their respective divisions. They trained all summer and did an outstanding job of representing Fort Collins!

- **Commission Membership**

Unlike years past, membership changes were minimal for 1998 and December finds the Commission with a full roster of eleven members. Members that resigned from the Commission included Ray Sanderson (February), Kathy Lassen (September) and Amy Rosenberg (November). New members include Nathan Montgomery (July), Lila Vizzard (December) and Mark Beck (December).

- **Commission Acknowledgments**

Ray Sanderson, a Commission member for over a decade was publicly thanked by the Commission at the 1998 Mayor's Awards and awarded a plaque for his years of valuable service. Kathy Lassen, former chair and a strong advocate for the Commission, was also awarded a plaque and publicly thanked for all her efforts. Nancy Stirling the COD staff liaison for 1998 who left employment with the City (to move to Arizona) was thanked for all her hard work at a Commission sponsored luncheon in her honor.

- **Commission Retreat:** On October 14th the Commission held a half-day retreat. The primary purpose of the retreat was to develop cohesiveness and strength of unity among the Commission members. Items that were addressed included: member commitment and

requirements, election of officers, meeting times, new member orientation, charge from the City, and COD priorities.

As a result of the retreat the Commission now shows a strength and a sense of direction that has been missing for several years. Decisions that were reached at the retreat included changing the meeting time to twice a month rather than once a month, stiffer attendance requirements and election of Don Fish as Chair, Initha Stuckey as Vice-chair, Stacey Abate as Member-At-Large, and Mark Cummings as Historian.

- **Mayor's Awards**

The 1998 Annual Mayor's Awards marked the 18<sup>th</sup> year of honoring Fort Collins community citizens and organizations. For the second year, this highly successful event was a luncheon held at the University Park Holiday Inn. Over 70 people attended the event which included presentation of the awards by Mayor Azari, recognition of past Commission members, and demonstrations by service dogs and their handlers.

The three categories honored by the Mayor's Awards are 1) Business of the Year, 2) Service Provider of the Year, and 3) Volunteer of the Year. The fourth category sponsored by Disabled American Veterans, is the Dorothy Lasley Memorial Award. Nominations for this year's awards outnumbered nominations for any of the seventeen previous Mayor's Awards. Nominations and recipients are as follows:

**Employer of the Year**

North American Title Company - Bob Coe  
Rehabilitation Designs of Colorado - Pat Forlenza, LeRoy Cynkar, Sheila Cynkar, Edie Busam & staff)  
Fort Collins Senior Center, Steve Budner  
**Seven Oaks Academy, Larry Neal, Owner (Chosen as Employer of the Year)**  
Rand-Scot, Inc., Joel Lerick, President

**Service Provider of the Year**

Northern Colorado AIDS Project  
**Jennifer Bell, Disabled Resource Services (Chosen as Service Provider of the Year)**  
Natalie J. Fyles  
Margaret Mizushima, Community Rehabilitation Services  
Jennifer Huston  
Steve Ackerman  
Joe Morrone  
Debbie Hobbs, Early Childhood Center, CSU

**Volunteer of the Year**

Brenda Sue Dennis  
Laura Burnett  
Jean Wheeler  
William "Bill" Livingston-Holt  
Marge Bjorlo

Leslie Bjorgum  
**Gladys Russell (Chosen as Volunteer of the Year)**

**Dorothy Lasley**

Brenda Sue Dennis  
Wayne T. Hickerson  
Dane N. Talmage  
**Richard Nolte (Chosen for the Dorothy Lasley Award)**  
Gladys Russell

• **Dial-A-Ride Presentation**

On November 7th, Jon Wright, acting DAR operations supervisor and Joaly Lueck, advisory board member made a presentation to the Commission. Items regarding who DAR serves, and when and where that service is provided included:

- People that qualify under the ADA (who cannot access fixed service due to mobility) or have any type of disability.
- Seniors above the age of 60.
- 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday. DAR is obligated to offer the same hours as Transfort so some routes now operate until 12:40 a.m.
- Mostly within City limits. ADA limits service to within 3/4 of a mile of the nearest fixed route.
- No-shows are their biggest problem.
- The one-way full fare is \$1.80, the reduced fare is \$.90, the hardship fare is \$.45, and there is no charge for seniors going to medical appointments.
- There are 18 vehicles with 34 drivers.
- They carry 2.8 passengers per hour and are the second most efficient paratransit operation in the country.

• **Commission Video**

For nearly a year, Mark Cummings (Historian) has been doing an admirable job working to get the Commission On Disability slide show/video produced. Primary tasks have included scripting, gathering of photos, and coordination with Cable 27 staff. The actual production will be done by Cable 27 and is expected to be completed by January 1999.

• **Complaints Heard by the Commission**

Steve Rierson, a student at Front Range Community College (FRCC) asked for the Commission's help regarding handicapped parking at FRCC. FRCC had closed a parking area and Mr. Rierson was having difficulty determining the reason for the closure. His primary issue, however, had to do with accessibility to buildings as related to the closure of the particular parking area.

The Commission researched the issue and asked for the assistance of Rose Kreston, Director of Resources for Disabled Students. Ms. Kreston told the Commission that FRCC has to provide access to all buildings but not parking at all buildings; in short, FRCC was in

compliance with the letter of the law (if not the spirit) of the ADA . FRCC, however, could provide parking at the building in question on a case by case basis.

The above information was shared with Mr. Rierson and the Commission suggested that he try to work with Bitsy Craig at FRCC to gain better parking access. If his efforts proved unsuccessful, the Commission invited him back and promised that they would continue to assist him. At the time of this report he had not contacted the Commission.