

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITY 2003 ANNUAL REPORT

2003 was another active year for the Fort Collins Commission on Disability. Our work plan was developed at our annual retreat in November of 2002. Our staff liaisons, Tracy Oschner and Rachel Palmer from the Facilities Department were helpful throughout the year providing support during our meetings and valuable insights and information relating to city department operations and administration. We were sorry to learn that Tracy was ending his term as liaison at the end of 2003. In his place, Steve White, from Facilities will be our new staff liaison in 2004. Rachel Palmer will continue in her position as staff liaison. During the year, Ruth Scogerboe presented the COD chair with a letter of resignation, however, she continued to be involved and attend meetings of both the COD and the Art Show Committee throughout the year. She did make her resignation final at the end of 2003. Allen Apt and Jill Lancaster also completed their term of service at the end of 2003. The COD welcomed two new members. Melinda Suits took her seat on the Commission in July and Jeff Harris began his term in September. At our April meeting, the Commission honored former members Rob and Ramola Fritz for their service on the COD. The main focus for the COD in 2003 was a revision of the bylaws, the Creative Abilities Art Show, Practical Housing for All and the Annual Mayor's Awards.

### Membership

COD members during 2003 were: Alan Apt, Mark Beck (Chair), Laura Burnet (Vice Chair), Joan Cook, Diane Dittus, Jill Lancaster (Secretary), Paul Ostrof, Jerry Patterson, Ruth Scogerboe, Susan Williams (Historian), Melinda Suits and Jeff Harris. Staff Liaisons were Tracy Ochsner and Rachael Palmer. Council Liaison is Marty Tharp.

### Budget

In March the COD, for the first time, developed a budget proposal and submitted it to the City Manager's Office. (The COD received funds from the General Fund via the City Managers Office)The proposed budget was based on the previous year's expenditures and expected needs for the current year. The proposed budget called for \$2260 in operating funds and \$4280 for Program expenses, including \$3800 for the Annual Mayor's Awards. In April, the City Manager's Office notified the COD Staff Liaison that the COD was budgeted \$1252 plus \$3000 for the Mayor's Awards.

As of April, when we received the news, there was about \$800 left in the coffers for the rest of the year. The Commission voted to discontinue the lunches that had been provided during the meetings and preserve the remaining funds for occasions such as the recognition of previous members and the Nov. Retreat as well as other incidental expenses. The Commission revised their budget according to the available funds and adopted the new budget at the May meeting.

Shortly after the notification from the Manager's Office and following some confusion as to how to handle incoming monies from Art Show Registration fees, financial responsibility for the COD was transferred from the City Manager's Office to the Facilities Department.

### Bylaws

A sub-committee consisting of Jerry Patterson, Jill Lancaster and Joan Cook examined the bylaws and made several recommendations that would bring the bylaws up to date with the actual operation of the Commission. One amendment was adopted in May. At that time the COD voted to convene for a regular meeting at 12:15 PM on the second Thursday of each month

in the CIC room in City Hall. The fourth Thursday would be reserved for various sub-committee meetings.

The sub-committee recommended nine additional amendments. Seven of those were voted on and accepted at a special October meeting. Two others were tabled until next year. As soon as the two final amendments are voted on, the bylaws will be updated and reprinted.

### Housing

The Practical Housing for All subcommittee of the COD continued regular monthly meetings on the second Thursday of the month, just prior to the COD meeting throughout the year. The committee is comprised of members of the COD; Mark Beck, Paul Ostrof, Felix Lee of the F. C. Building Dept., Dana McBride, NCHBA Board Member and architect and other occasional members from the building and realtor community. The primary goal of the group is to encourage builders and developers to voluntarily and routinely offer routine accessibility in building designs to their consumers. Routine accessibility prescribes a barrier free entry into a home with accessibility into all areas on the ground floor.

The PHA Committee revised the design features so that a PHA home is not just "visitable", it is "livable". The PHA building features are

- A wheel-chair accessible exterior route to a no-step accessible entrance and entry door;
- A main floor with no less than a kitchen, a full bathroom and a room that can be used as a bedroom with sufficient maneuvering space for a wheelchair.
- A minimum 32" clear opening at all doorways. Lever handles hardware preferred
- A 36 inch wide level route, except at the doors, throughout the first floor or main floor;
- A full bathroom has a minimum 30' X 48" clear space in front of the sink, toilet and tub/shower and reinforcement in the walls around the toilet and tub for grab bars.
- Electrical switches, thermostats, receptacles and electrical panels located between 15 and 48 inches above the floor.

The PHA committee, with help from Brad Randell of the Cities Communication Dept. developed new PHA Brochures and a Builders Guide that describe the PHA features. The Coloradoan did an extensive article on PHA in February and the Mayor published editorials in the Coloradoan and the Forum in support of PHA. The Mayor plans to take the PHA concept to the Annual Mayor' Conference in Washington, DC in January, 2004.

### Heavy Doors Project

The Heavy Doors Project continued this year. The project, started in 2002, help assess and encourage adjustment of hard to open doors to businesses in Ft. Collins. Volunteers, mostly CSU students, canvas businesses, provide them with a pamphlet and offer to check the amount of force it takes to open entry and bathroom doors and provide suggestions for adjusting them so that they meet ADA guidelines. Maps of the major Ft. Collins business areas have been created. Canvassers have completed covering most of College Ave, down town, North of Olive St. The Project will continue under the guidance of Susan Williams.

### Creative Abilities Art Show

Susan Williams initiated and then chaired a committee too produce the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Creative Abilities Art Show. Members of the committee included Ruth Scogerboe, Jeff Harris, Mark Beck, Rob and Ramola Fritz plus other occasional members. The Creative Abilities Art Show was held October 11 & 12, 2003 at the Foothills Mall. Twenty artists, who had a variety of disabilities, had the opportunity to publicly display their art. The show was considered a success and plans are being made for the second Annual Show in October 2004.

## Mayor's Awards

October 15, 2003 marked the twenty-third annual Mayor's Awards, held at the Marriott. For the second year, the COD and Roger Van Lieshout of the Fort Collins Business Leadership Network collaborated to produce the Mayor's Awards. This year, the BLN led by the tireless efforts of Steve Sutter, organized the event, including a Lifestyles/Career Fair that immediately followed the Awards. The focus of the awards this year was employment of people with disabilities. Nancy Jackson of Disabled Resource Services and a former COD member acted as MC. Mayor Ray Martinez hosted the event. Joyce Bender of Bender Consulting Services of Pittsburgh, PA was the keynote speaker.

The COD focused on nominations and the actual awards process. This year a new award, The Spirit of Fort Collins Award, was added to recognize an individual or business that exemplifies the spirit of assisting the disabled in our community.

Winners of this year's awards are: Business of the Year – Chili's, Jared Habein, manager; Service Provider of the Year – Spirit Crossing Club House, Natalie Brown, Director; Volunteer of the Year – Rick Aulino; Dorothy Lasley Award – Steve Rierson; Spirit of Fort Collins Award – Susan Williams.

The Commission thanks Mayor Martinez, the Mayor's and City Manager's offices for support and participation in this important public recognition of volunteerism in Fort Collins.

## Accessible Playground Project

In August, Mayor Martinez made a presentation to the Commission about creating a fully accessible playground in the Rigdon Farms development and asked the COD for endorsement of the project. The Commission unanimously supported the concept. Jerry Patterson is a member of the Playground Planning Committee.

## Resource Directory

Ruth Scogerboe collected information throughout the year to develop a resource notebook containing information about services, agencies, support services or groups and other contact information that might be of use for individuals with disabilities. The Commission will continue to update and make it available to members of the community who are seeking information. Since Ms. Scogerboe left the Commission at the end of 2003, Melinda Suits will continue the development of the Resource Directory.

## 2004 Executive Board

The 2004 Executive Board was chosen at the September meeting. They are: Mark Beck, Chair; Susan Williams, Vice Chair; Jerry Patterson, Secretary; Jeff Harris, Historian.

The Commission on Disability completed an active and involved year. The concern for persons with disabilities that is present in the Fort Collins community is remarkable, and the Commission takes pride in contributing to the example that the City administration has set.

Respectfully submitted

Mark Beck, COD Chairman

December 2003