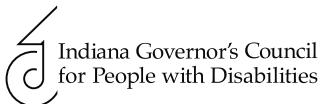


ignite thoughts into action

# spark



Indiana Governor's Council  
for People with Disabilities

**feb/mar 2013**  
volume 3 number 2

## in this issue on **ATTITUDES**



What affects  
our attitudes?



Disabilities in  
the spotlight



Conference  
highlights

in this issue on  
**ATTITUDES**

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**Marketing goods and services, advancing a concept, or changing public opinion is no easy task. It's an art and a science requiring demographic research and analyzing a target audience. Understanding how an audience thinks, coupled with a sound strategy of framing and delivering the message, is key – and potentially lucrative.**

Every day, there are businesses who collect and process consumer data – more than a billion data streams a day – and sell this data to various organizations who want to craft the perfect “sales campaign.” We're categorized, clustered, and given “trigger points” based on our usage of credit cards, size of homes, change of address and more. According to Group M, in 2010, approximately \$142.5 billion was spent on U.S. advertising. In 2009, Global Market Insight reported that \$1.63 billion was spent on lobbying Capitol Hill. And all this spending toward crafting the perfect message pays off!

How can the disability community hope to change attitudes and move the needle on public policy without the vast resources at the disposal of large corporations? The answer lies within us.

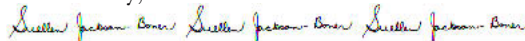
The disability community has stories to tell and possesses a great deal of talent and skills, individually and collectively. We have the 2013 Disability Awareness Month Campaign on Community Connections to emphasize inclusion, access and participation for all people. We have social media, personal contact, volunteer power, good ol' Hoosier ingenuity and tireless work ethic.

We can partner with others, discover funding streams dedicated to the creation of livable communities and rely on the Americans with Disabilities Act to address inclusion and participation. But, we must put these resources to use!

In this issue of Spark, we explore the attitudes within our social landscape – how they have the ability to make or break communities – and how our own attitudes can dictate how others feel toward us and society as a whole.

The following articles will help people with disabilities, advocates and others better understand how attitudes shape our society and how they can influence building accepting, embracing communities.

Sincerely,



SuelLEN JACKSON-BONER  
Executive Director

**spark** is a bi-monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, an independent state agency that facilitates change. Our mission is to promote the independence, productivity and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. This mission is accomplished through planning, evaluation, collaboration, education, research and advocacy.

**Suellen Jackson-Boner**  
Executive Director

**Christine Dahlberg**  
Deputy Director



# What affects our attitudes?

Irving Crespi, a noted contributor to the field of public opinion research, explains an attitude is comprised of four components: frame of reference, knowledge of a subject, emotions and personal intentions. Neither a judgment nor an opinion, an attitude is a disposition someone has based on an “accumulation of [his or her] experiences.”

## Accumulation of experiences

Your accumulation of experiences is directly affected by the generation in which you grew up. Our ever-evolving world is the result of the advancement of our global society – in diplomacy, economy, technology – and all its positive or negative impacts.

The authors of “Multi-Generational Marketing: Descriptions, Characteristics, Lifestyles, and Attitudes” from the Journal of

Applied Business and Economics, Vol. 11, spell out the various experiences and shared attitudes of each generation. Their description of the “multi-generational age” helps us better understand what an accumulation of experiences means. [See “Defining the Generations” on page 4 for comparisons.]

## Sending a message

Introducing new messages or working to change attitudes is a constant challenge for advocates. People react to similar issues differently because of their world view, shaped by which generation they were born into. So how do we get messages across? Can we really change attitudes of people from a different generation?

The answer is “yes,” but it all depends on the way we “frame” our message. Framing uses words, images, phrases and presentation styles to relay information,

according to Dietram Scheufele, Ph.D., from his article entitled “Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication.”

Dr. Scheufele says effectively reaching any audience requires a fine-tuned message. To relate to people across generations, the message should also focus on changing systems rather than individuals.

## Lessons in framing

FrameWorks Institute ([frameworksinstitute.org](http://frameworksinstitute.org)) is a nonprofit organization that provides counsel to other nonprofits on framing. Advocates and others who want to effectively spread new ideas and forge new attitudes may find FrameWorks Institute’s expertise helpful. They explain, “A frame is an organizing principle. It is the way a story

# Defining the GENERATIONS

## PRE-DEPRESSION < 1930

CULTURAL CONTEXT	CHARACTERISTICS
World Wars I & II	Conservative
High unemployment	Altruistic
Economic strife	Less materialistic
Less mobile	Societal

## DEPRESSION 1931 – 1945

CULTURAL CONTEXT	CHARACTERISTICS
The Great Depression	Law abiding
Rock music	Family-minded
Social Security	Patriotic
Rationing	Moral/ethical

## BABY BOOMERS 1946 – 1964

CULTURAL CONTEXT	CHARACTERISTICS
Cold War	Workaholics
Civil Rights Movement	Status-seeking
Sexual revolution	Socially responsible
Woodstock	Seek self-fulfillment

## GENERATION X 1965 – 1977

CULTURAL CONTEXT	CHARACTERISTICS
Challenger explosion	Highly educated
HIV/AIDS pandemic	Entrepreneurial
Regional conflicts	Materialistic
Video games	Time-crunched

## GENERATION Y 1978 – 1994

CULTURAL CONTEXT	CHARACTERISTICS
End of the Cold War	Image-driven
Dual-income homes	Curious
Rise in divorce	Optimistic
Corporate greed	Confident

## GENERATION Z 1994 <

CULTURAL CONTEXT	CHARACTERISTICS
9/11	Trendy
Iraq War	High-tech
The Internet	Diverse
School violence	Civic-minded

is told that triggers the shared and durable cultural models that people use to make sense of their world.”

A frame organizes an important message to elicit a specific audience response. FrameWorks provides many useful lessons on its website with instructions on perfecting a frame.

**1. Priming your message matters.** Many advocates and experts want to talk about specific policy right off the bat instead of situating their message under the category in which it falls. For example, a discussion on Complete Streets should start by describing advantages of accessible transportation and road systems.

**2. Context matters.** “Connect the dots” to a wider picture by identifying people, communities and trends your issue effects.

**3. Visuals and messengers matter.** The person who “tells the story” must be credible, and there are effective messengers and appropriate imagery that speak to each generation.

## Effectively reaching multiple generations

FrameWorks states, “understanding is frame-based, not fact-based, theory-based, not data-based.”

Therefore, messages that resonate to wide audiences are framed well. The aforementioned journal article provides tips to consider for multi-generational messaging:

- Generation-shaping social and economic events influence how each group reacts. Be aware of a target generation’s world view.

- Find ways in which the generations are similar and add these elements into your communications.
- Create the image of an ageless society where people define themselves more by their activities than by their age. Remember grandparents could be 45, 65 or 85, and college students could be 20, 30 or 60.
- People cycle through different life-stage events based on their interests rather than their age. People might say “50 years old is the new 40,” because they enjoy maintaining the same energy toward their interests.
- Don’t apply your personal generational values and attitudes to communications and strategies for another generation.

## Work toward change

To read the full article on multi-generational marketing, log on to [na-businesspress.com/JABE/Jabe112/WilliamsWeb.pdf](http://na-businesspress.com/JABE/Jabe112/WilliamsWeb.pdf). Web search terms such as “attitude formation,” “generational messaging” and “framing for advocacy” will uncover more information and resources. The YouTube ([youtube.com](http://youtube.com)) video entitled “Storytelling for Change: the Science and Art of Effective Communications” is also a way you can hear directly from a FrameWorks consultant.

Changing someone’s attitude is not easy. It is a process that involves planning and adjustments to a person’s world view and accumulation of experiences. However, once you change someone’s attitude, you are well on your way to changing his or her behavior. \*

# Changing attitudes on employment

**T**he Indiana Business Leadership Network, a consortium of regional business networks that work to advance employment of people with disabilities, reports roughly two-thirds of the 270,000 working-age Indiana residents with disabilities are unemployed – the highest unemployment rate among all Indiana minorities.

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) says attitudes influence the employment and retention of people with disabilities. Examples include:

- Whether jobseekers with disabilities and their families perceive themselves as able to work and support themselves financially.
- Whether employers and coworkers perceive the employment and retention of people with disabilities as profitable and safe for their organization.
- Whether workforce development professionals perceive that people with disabilities are capable of working.

Joyce Bender, founder and president of Bender Consulting Services, Inc., and her staff help people with disabilities find meaningful employment. She believes the greatest obstacle people with disabilities face is being hired for the wrong reason.

“At times, businesses look at potential employees with disabilities as a charity case,” Bender says. “It’s an attitudinal barrier – businesses hire people with disabilities following a ‘medical model’ rather than a diversity model. They fear the expenses of accommodations and underperformance, and becoming ‘stuck’ with [the employee].”

While positive strides are being made toward the employment of people with disabilities, there is still work to be done. ODEP leads three key initiatives to raise awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.

## **What Can YOU Do?**

([whatcanyoudocampaign.org](http://whatcanyoudocampaign.org)) advocates that people with disabilities positively impact the workforce.

**National Disability Employment Awareness Month** ([dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam](http://dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam)) celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities.

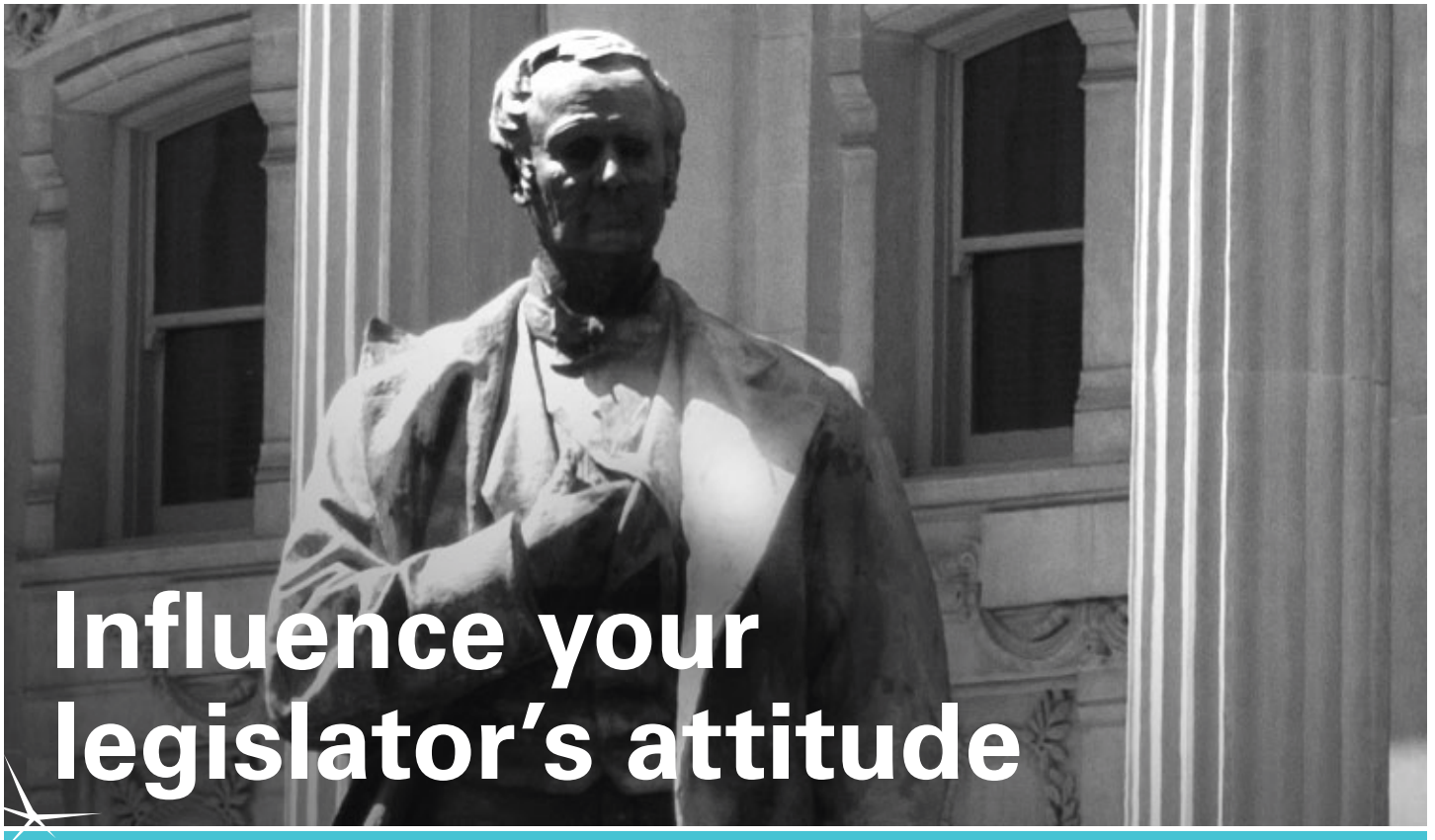
**Add Us IN** ([dol.gov/odep/AddUsIn](http://dol.gov/odep/AddUsIn)) develops strategies to increase small business for workers with disabilities.

In September 2012, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (IDWD) more than \$2.27 million to support and improve education, training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed

and/or are receiving Social Security disability benefits. According to IDWD Commissioner Scott Sanders, “These grant dollars will enable WorkOne staff to enhance our outreach to Hoosiers with disabilities and further help them acquire the skills and training they need to be successful in the workplace.”

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), in cooperation with the Social Security Administration (SSA), is contacting select employers in Indianapolis to test a new “Occupational Requirements Survey” that will help the BLS develop the best possible questions and methods for a future nationwide study of the physical demands, environmental conditions and vocational preparation requirements of many occupations. These data will help the SSA facilitate claims settlements and may help provide disability applicants with potential employment opportunities.

Finally, employment advocates can use The Arc of Indiana’s new film series, “Pathways to Employment,” that share six unique stories bearing the message that hiring people with developmental disabilities is “Good for Business, Good for People and Good for the Economy.” View these films on The Arc’s YouTube channel, [youtube.com/arcadvocate](http://youtube.com/arcadvocate), and order the advocacy tool kit by contacting The Arc at (317) 977-2375 or [thearc@arcind.org](mailto:thearc@arcind.org). \*



# Influence your legislator's attitude

In his book, “How to Become Effective Disability Policy Change Agents,” Bobby Silverstein, J.D., principal at the Washington, D.C.-based law firm Powers, Pyles, Sutter and Verville, states that the old disability policy was to “correct” the disability. If the person with a disability couldn’t be “fixed,” laws supported exclusion, segregation, institutionalization, and denial of services and supports.

Today, state and national policy is increasingly focused on fixing the physical and social environment to provide meaningful and effective opportunities for people with disabilities. However, remnants of the old policy still remain. It is up to constituents and concerned citizens to help advance legislative bills concerning disability and broad community-improvement policy.

Fifth Freedom, a grassroots cross-disability advocacy group, hosts several workshops on advocating for causes that support rights and services people with disabilities need and want. Fifth Freedom advocates are firm believers in “Nothing About Us Without Us” – those in the disability community must be included and their opinions must be weighed when making the final decision on a bill or policy.

There are several ways you and other advocates can take action to influence legislator attitudes about people with disabilities and gain favorable votes for bills and policy changes impacting disability issues.

## Stay informed

In the words of Sir Francis Bacon, “Knowledge is Power.” Such words ring true when changing new and returning legislators’ attitudes

toward disability issues. Arm yourself with information about what issues are currently on the table and how potential policy changes or new legislation may affect people with disabilities.

Here are some important disability issues facing our state legislators:

- **Complete Streets (SB 450)** requires the Indiana Department of Transportation to consistently plan, design, operate and maintain roadways while being mindful of all users – bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities.
- **Mass transit (HB 1011)** gives local elected officials in 10 central Indiana counties (Boone, Delaware, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Morgan and Shelby) the option of letting voters decide via referendum whether to increase the county economic

development tax and to dedicate those new funds to support a Metropolitan Transit District in these counties.

- **Accessible parking (SB 380 and HB 1509)** creates a fund to bring awareness about the misuse of accessible parking

**“Personal letters have more impact than form letters. Writing about [one] issue in your own words shows how the issue impacts you. Sending a form letter shows that you can click a button on a website.”**

– Fifth Freedom on effective letter writing

spaces for people with physical disabilities. It sets a \$400 minimum fine for parking in an accessible space without proper credentials, and \$100 of each ticket paid will be transferred to the fund.

- **Restraint/seclusion in schools (SB 345)** requires local school boards to approve policies on the use of seclusion and restraints in schools. It outlines appropriate training, notification protocol and use of standard definitions for common restraint/seclusion measures, as well as mandates that schools treat all students with dignity and respect.

To see an updated list of bills covering these disability-related issues and their status within the Indiana General Assembly, visit the General Assembly website ([in.gov/legislative](http://in.gov/legislative)) or Fifth Freedom’s 2013 bill tracker at [fifthfreedom.org/2013-indiana-bill-tracker](http://fifthfreedom.org/2013-indiana-bill-tracker). To advocate for any of these issues,

refer to the Resources page for advocate groups who are meeting with legislators about these topics.

### **Lend your voice**

Assess the circumstances you face when speaking or writing to a legislator about a particular bill.

Before you give your opinion on an issue, you have to let them know why they should care what you think. According to Fifth Freedom, politicians want the opinions of four kinds of people:

#### **1. Voters in their districts**

Politicians care more about you if they know you can vote to keep them in – or remove them from – office.

#### **2. Stakeholders**

A stakeholder is someone directly impacted by the bill or issue.

#### **3. Experts**

People who have professional experience in a particular area.

#### **4. Group representatives**

A member of an organization speaking on the organization’s behalf. This could be a nonprofit, social club or advocacy group.

The more you represent the traits on this list, the more influence

you have on the attitude of your legislator.

### **Contact your legislator in writing**

Here is an excerpt from Fifth Freedom’s website describing effective letter writing to your elected official:

“Personal letters have more impact than form letters. Writing about [one] issue in your own words shows how the issue impacts you. Sending a form letter shows that you can click a button on a website.”

To read the entire document, go to [fifthfreedom.org](http://fifthfreedom.org) and click on Workshops at the top of the page.

### **Start today**

A new legislative session is the best time for people with disabilities and advocates to kick-start efforts to ensure disability-related legislation is on the agenda. On Jan. 7, 2013, the Indiana General Assembly convened to start considering legislation, and the session will end by April 29. To make an impact, it’s critical to start your conversations and letters now. Initiate contact with new legislators to introduce yourself and your concerns and, as always, continue building relationships with returning legislators. \*



# Student competition highlights awareness, changes ATTITUDES

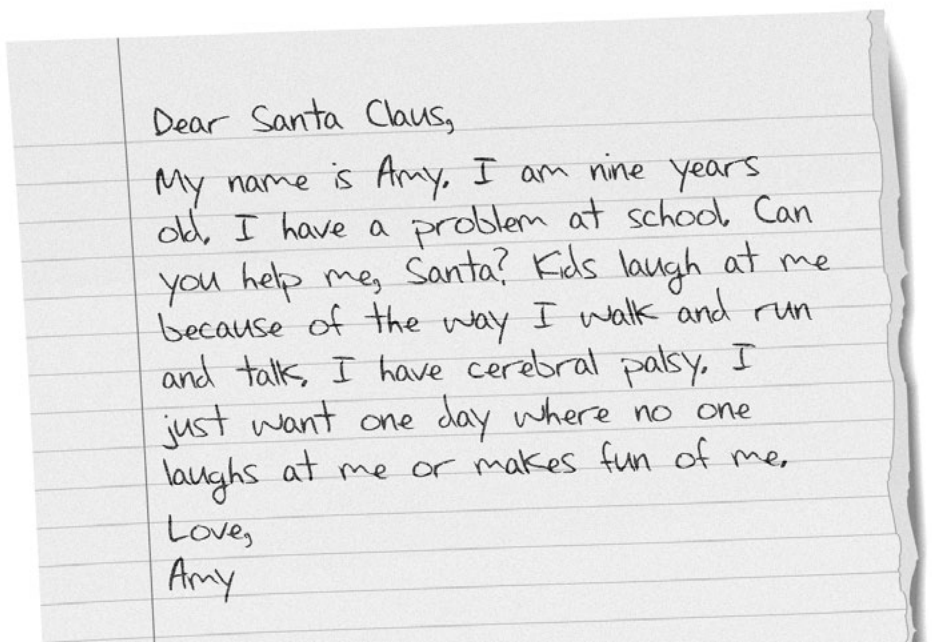
**A**my Hagadorn, a nine-year-old student with cerebral palsy, wrote a letter to Santa 17 years ago asking that she not be the target of bullying at school for at least a day. Who would have guessed this single courageous act would spawn 2,000 letters of support and friendship from people all over the world and inspire the ATTITUDE Essay Contest?

Amy's letter, a response to a radio station contest, took the station by surprise and quickly became state and national news. Her story was also published in the book "Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul." But most importantly, Amy got her wish. In Fort Wayne, Ind., December 21 is known as Amy Jo Hagadorn Day – a day when everyone can remember the universal lesson of treating everyone with respect, dignity and warmth.

Now 26, Amy is a graduate of Elmhurst High School who corresponds with several pen pals who have been in contact with her ever since her letter to Santa. If you know Amy personally, she'll probably make you a homemade

card to celebrate any special occasion – her specialty! She still recalls the day she wrote her letter, how it made a difference in her life and how it impacted others.

"Whatever the situation, I know there's always a good side. A light





at the end of the tunnel will always be there if you look for it,” Amy said.

### **ATTITUDE Essay Contest an annual tradition**

Donna Roberts, executive director of United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Indiana (UCPAGI), sees Amy’s letter as an opportunity to teach others about changing attitudes. Now in its 17th year, UCPAGI, in partnership with the Indiana Governor’s Council

began in 1995. When this year’s competition is complete, more than 200 schools will have participated and more than 7,000 essays will have been submitted.

Students have taken the opportunity to heart, writing some of the best attitude-adjustment stories Roberts says she has ever come across. “You get goose bumps when you read this stuff!” she exclaimed.

**“Whatever the situation, I know there’s always a good side. A light at the end of the tunnel will always be there if you look for it.”**

– Amy Hagadorn

for People with Disabilities, sponsors the annual ATTITUDE Essay Contest. The contest builds awareness among elementary and middle school students about how attitudes toward people with disabilities can serve as barriers to their achievements and well-being.

Third- through eighth-grade Indiana students submit their essays during January and February, and a panel of judges reads every entry.

The contest encourages students to write their essays by: 1) interviewing a child or adult with a disability and describing the experience; 2) reading a book about a person with a disability and reflecting on what change or impact he or she made; or 3) writing about personal observations they may have experienced. An ATTITUDE recognition dinner is held during Disability Awareness Month in March, and the winners in each grade category are awarded cash prizes. The top 30 essays are also published in a booklet each year.

Roberts says she has looked forward to reading each essay since the contest

The best essays, according to Roberts, are those that recognize a change in a student’s personal attitude – where making a new best friend might be the end result. Creativity, originality, quality of writing and understanding of the issue are also considered by the judges.

### **Teaching a new generation**

Roberts says she is consistently amazed at the response she receives from teachers. Some schools have incorporated the contest into their yearly anti-bullying campaign, and one Indianapolis school reads an essay per day over the morning announcements during the month of March.

“A teacher who incorporates this contest into his or her curriculum is setting an attitude for the classroom,” Roberts adds. “It is a way for us to raise a generation of kids who have positive attitudes toward people with disabilities.”

To learn more about the ATTITUDE Essay Contest and to follow this year’s results, visit [ucpaindy.org](http://ucpaindy.org). \*

## **Butterfly**

She is an amazing butterfly,  
And yet, no one knows.  
They always seem to pass  
her by,  
And day after day, it shows.

I am only ten years old,  
I accept her as a friend.  
I’m told I have a heart of gold,  
So some gold to her wings  
I’ll lend.

I look upon the butterfly,  
And see not what others do.  
I see she wants to learn to fly,  
I want to teach her how to.

My other friends just don’t  
understand;  
None of them truly know,  
The things to be done by the  
butterfly’s hand,  
But I let the butterfly go...

I saw the tears upon her face,  
I’ll not forget that day.  
I found my heart was out  
of place,  
For I put the butterfly’s  
wings away.

I did not know then what to do,  
To take her back or not.  
To do what my friends or heart  
told me to.  
The answer is what I sought.

But I did not have to seek  
too long,  
For the tears upon her face  
Told me she wanted to belong,  
In the world, to have a place.

I accepted her as a friend  
once more,  
And not one moment has  
gone by  
That I regret what could be  
in store  
For befriending a wonderful  
butterfly...

– Emily Elder, March 2006  
ATTITUDE Essay Contest  
winner \*



# Checking the temperature of attitudes in health care

Last year, Jennifer Byerly became very excited after hearing a women's wellness mobile unit, funded by the state, would be visiting Spencer County. It seemed like a helpful resource to share with some of her clients with disabilities. Little did she know, the bus was not ADA accessible, and when she expressed her concern to the mobile unit's sponsoring hospital, they explained how a loophole in the law allowed them to continue its service. Byerly was concerned and has long questioned why attitudes like this persist in health care today.

## A diagnosed problem

In a study published in the April 2012 American Journal of Nursing, researchers sought to understand the experiences of people with disabilities and their interactions with nurses and other medical personnel. During hospital stays,

the study identified four common themes:

1. poor communication with and from nursing staff;
2. compromised care or incompetent health care providers;
3. negative attitudes of nursing staff; and
4. participants' fears related to quality of care.

Through experience, Byerly knows doctors sometimes do not look beyond a person's initial "presentation" of themselves during an examination. Byerly shared the story of a woman with behavioral health disabilities who was not properly examined for breast cancer. For two years, the woman knew there was a lump in her breast, but she was unaware she needed to tell her physician about it. Despite the fact that breast cancer ran in the

woman's family, the doctor never conducted a breast exam or taught the woman how to conduct a self-examination.

These attitudes also permeate to Indiana prisons. The Indianapolis Star reported on Jan. 2, 2013, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana found "mentally ill prisoners within the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) segregation units are not receiving minimally adequate mental health care in terms of scope, intensity and duration."

The ruling made clear the IDOC was aware of poor treatment of prisoners with mental illness. In fact, "nearly 50 percent of inmate suicides occurring within the IDOC since 2007 were committed by mentally ill offenders," said Judge Tanya Walton Pratt. Kelly Jones Sharp, director of communications and education for the American Civil Liberties Union

of Indiana, said that severe harm caused by isolating prisoners with mental conditions, often without proper screening, "...has been a very serious, ongoing problem."

## Symptoms and assumptions

These attitude-related problems in health care are rooted in many causes, and they affect the attitudes of people with disabilities and their willingness to trust their doctors. The U.S. Public Health Service believes some people with disabilities feel excluded from public wellness campaigns – illustrated by Byerly's account of the wellness bus. Some patients reported difficulty finding an adequate supply of health care professionals willing to accept them as patients and knowledgeable about meeting their specialized needs.

From her personal research, Byerly contends Indiana graduates the lowest number of psychiatric doctors in the nation. Because of that, 80 percent of medications to treat mental health diagnoses are being prescribed by general practitioners.

Research from the National Council on Disability (NCD) suggests that untrained medical staff who make incorrect assumptions about people with disabilities may result in 30 to 50 percent of adults with disabilities receiving delayed or obstructed care. Incorrect assumptions include:

- People with disabilities have a low quality of life.
- People with developmental disabilities do not feel pain and, therefore, do not require anesthesia.

- People who are deaf have cognitive deficits because they may not be fluent in standard English.
- Women with disabilities do not require reproductive counseling or care because they may be perceived as sexually inactive.

These encounters can result in the breakdown of patient/physician relationships and further discourage people with disabilities from seeking medical attention. "Assumption is the number one way to get in trouble," Byerly said.

## A slow recovery

In previous years, little progress had been made in developing a consistent indicator of disability in federal health surveys. However, the NCD reports recent positive steps to address this issue. "For example, 1) in a number of recent reports on health, disability is used as a population variable; 2) there has been increased attention to, and acknowledgement of the importance of, collecting data about the health care experiences of people with disabilities; 3) promising research is underway to develop surveys that will gather information not previously measured about the health care experiences of people with disabilities; and 4) some surveys are developing and implementing data collection methods that will result in the inclusion of people with disabilities who were previously excluded from surveys."

Another solution to adjust patient-doctor attitudes in health care is using the Whole Health Action Management (WHAM) curriculum designed by SAMHSA-HRSA Center for Integrated Health Solutions and being delivered by the National

Council for Behavioral Health. Byerly was one of the first 25 Indiana participants to be trained in WHAM, and she believes it's a pivotal tool for people in the medical health and addiction field because it teaches mental health wellness practices, how to be a peer mentor and how to be assertive when telling a doctor exactly why you are in his or her office.

Byerly and her organization, the Rockport Engagement Center, funded by the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction, feel strongly about the need to place more people with disabilities on the state's 92 local public health boards. Current state statute requires that local board of health members be comprised of "four persons knowledgeable in public health, at least two of whom are licensed physicians. Another two appointees may be: a registered nurse, registered pharmacist, dentist, hospital administrator, social worker, attorney with expertise in health matters, a school superintendent, veterinarian, professional engineer, environmental scientist, two representatives of the general public or a representative from any of these subdivisions."

Byerly and her team are advocating for the addition of two representatives who are engaged with the local disability community, with at least one individual living with a functional or access need as covered under the ADA. To help promote Rockport Engagement Center's efforts, talk to your elected officials and let them know a different perspective – and attitude – on public health is important to you. ✨



# Casting disabilities in the spotlight

In 1994, people around the world fell in love with Tom Hanks' endearing character in the groundbreaking film "Forrest Gump." Hanks' portrayal of Forrest was one of the first times in filmmaking a star character with disabilities has excelled beyond perceived limitations, and in this case played a part in some of the most historic world events of the 1960s and 70s. The film won several Academy Awards, including best actor for Hanks' performance, and helped set the stage for casting disabilities in a positive light on the big screen.

However, as movies often do, the blockbuster hit exaggerated its characters and plot and the audience was led to believe that Forrest's extravagant achievements were made possible, or were even more impressive, because of his disabilities. This "super-human" scenario – overcoming obstacles

to lead radically successful lives – is a common focus in film and the news media when depicting people with disabilities. We can't argue the 2001 film "A Beautiful Mind" would have been as compelling if Russell Crowe's character with schizophrenia wasn't a brilliant mathematician who wins the Nobel Prize. These on-screen themes perpetuate stereotypes that lead to misguided attitudes in the real world.

Portrayals of people with disabilities in film, television, advertisements, news and other mediums both reflect and influence how society views disability. The media we consume plays a significant role in shaping what we think, and with messages coming at us through more channels than ever before, we're surrounded by countless influencers impacting our attitudes and behaviors.

## Stereotypes on screen

In a 2012 Los Angeles Times article, Lawrence Carter-Long, a disability activist and adviser for the Alliance for Inclusion in the Arts, explained how movies have changed through the years to reflect society's evolving view of people with disabilities. Up through the 1920s, silent films like "Phantom of the Opera" and "The Unknown" depicted people with disabilities as monsters and outcasts – born from the old-age belief that disability was something to fear and reject.

After World War II, we saw a transition to sympathetic portrayals of veterans returning from combat with disabilities, reflecting a common off-screen theme being experienced by many soldiers and their families. As filmmakers realized they could capture audiences' hearts with stories of tragedy, more movies

emerged about devastating accidents that leave characters struggling with disabilities. 1998's "Horse Whisperer" follows Grace, a young girl who lost her leg and injured her horse during an accident, to Montana where Robert Redford's character attempts to retrain the horse and help Grace through her disability.

In more recent years, films have begun to address stereotypes about people with disabilities' capacity to care for themselves and their children, lead fulfilling lives and have meaningful romantic relationships. Released in 1999, "The Other Sister" starred Juliette Lewis as a young adult with Down syndrome who proves herself to be as capable as her sister without disabilities by moving into her own apartment, attending college and falling in love. And in 2001, Sean Penn played a man with intellectual disabilities who fights for custody of his seven-year-old daughter in "I Am Sam."

In television, the stream of popular shows like "Parenthood" – which features a young character with Asperger's syndrome – reflects a monumental shift in media from conventional to contemporary plots and characters that more closely mimic present-day society. Furthermore, reality TV has entered our living rooms, and audiences' appetites for entertainment are welcoming plots that represent more realistic events than scripted shows. The latest season of ABC's reality show "The Bachelor" introduced Sarah, who was born with one arm, as a potential wife for bachelor Sean Lowe. Sarah scored the first one-on-one date and, true to the show's outrageous fashion, they started the day by free-falling from a 35-story building. Sarah was thrilled that Sean and the producers didn't worry about her ability to participate in the adventure.

## Playing the part

"We look to our stages and screens not only for entertainment, but to hold a mirror up to society," said Christine Bruno, co-chair of the Tri-Union Inclusion in the Arts & Media of People With Disabilities (I AM PWD) campaign, in an article on the campaign's website. "Our industry has a responsibility to its artists and the viewing public to accurately reflect what we see on our streets and in our communities."

A 2011 study reporting on minority representation in television revealed that scripted characters with disabilities represent less than 1 percent – a total of five recurring characters at the time of the study – of all scripted series' regular characters on primetime networks. Cable television performed slightly better with 10 regular and four recurring characters with disabilities appearing on various series. Furthermore, in contrast to primetime network shows, characters on cable were oftentimes played by actors with disabilities.

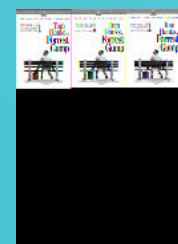
"This is evidence of positive change," Bruno said. "More cable producers and writers than ever before have demonstrated a commitment to authentic casting and accurate storylines. The success of these programs reflects the evolving attitudes and appetites of viewers, and puts those who create them ahead of the curve, creatively and financially."

Carter-Long noted the same progress in the Los Angeles Times article. "For non-disabled actors, playing disabled characters has been a way for them to get awards, to win Oscars," he said. "What we're seeing happen now, though, is that people are starting to question it. Just as you wouldn't have someone who's not African-American play an African-American role without

## Stereotypes on screen



Russell Crowe portrays a young prodigy who develops paranoid schizophrenia and delusions in "A Beautiful Mind."



In an Oscar-winning performance, Tom Hanks plays a character who overcomes mental and physical limitations in "Forrest Gump."



Sean Penn stars in "I Am Sam" as a father with a developmental disability who fights for custody of his daughter.



In "Glee," Becky is played by Lauren Potter, an actress with Down syndrome and a White House adviser for the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities.

a lot of eyebrows being raised, those kinds of questions are being asked within the industry.”

One series facing this question is FOX’s musical comedy-drama “Glee,” which has been applauded for confronting a myriad of social issues including treatment of students with disabilities. But one of the show’s main characters, Artie, a singer and dancer who uses a wheelchair, is played by an actor without disabilities. However, the series also introduced Becky, a recurring character played by

## Making it in mainstream

Beyond film and television, people with disabilities are largely underrepresented in news and advertising. Aside from products and services targeting people with disabilities, ads geared toward the general public are mostly absent of anyone with a disability. Decades ago, advertisers reasoned that people with disabilities did not make enough economic impact to warrant them being target audiences for mainstream products and services.

**“I look forward to the day when characters with disabilities portrayed by actors with disabilities are also reflected accurately and frequently in film and television.”**

– Diana Elizabeth Jordan, co-chair, I AM PWD campaign

Lauren Potter, who is an actress with Down syndrome and a White House adviser for the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. Breaking stereotypes, Becky stars as co-captain of the high school cheer squad and delivers memorable lines that showcase her confident, witty personality.

“According to the U.S. Census Bureau, one out of five people in America are living with a disability,” said Diana Elizabeth Jordan, co-chair of the I AM PWD campaign. “I look forward to the day when characters with disabilities portrayed by actors with disabilities are also reflected accurately and frequently in film and television.”

As people with disabilities – and parents of children with disabilities – are gradually proving their consumer value, retailers are taking note. A blog by Drumbeat Consulting, a marketing firm that helps companies promote their products to people with disabilities, recently noted that a Target ad promoting a kids’ clothing sale featured a child with Down syndrome. The online ad included an ethnically diverse group of kids, including Ryan Langston, who displays the classic physical features associated with Down syndrome. Target didn’t highlight the inclusion of Ryan or even take the opportunity to earn a pat on the back by announcing it in a news release. “It was inclusive advertising, done in a powerful and unobtrusive way,” the blog read.

Similarly, people with disabilities are rarely covered in news outside of stories specifically about disabilities. Advocacy and journalism organizations, including the Society of Professional Journalists, encourage reporters to address the disability angle when covering general topics. When talking about voting, discuss accessibility at the polls. If addressing employment trends, include data about workers and job seekers with disabilities. The National Center on Disability and Journalism ([ncdj.org](http://ncdj.org)) provides tips for reporters interviewing and reporting about people with disabilities, as well as a style guide for writing and speaking about disabilities. The Governor’s Council also has a downloadable version of “The Power of Words: A guide to interacting with people with disabilities” brochure at [in.gov/gpcpd/2360.htm](http://in.gov/gpcpd/2360.htm).

## Time to shine

Locally, people with disabilities have the opportunity to connect with ArtsWork Indiana to try to earn some time in the spotlight. The organization provides a listing of casting calls, call for entries and more for people with disabilities in the visual and performing arts. Log on to [artsworkindiana.org](http://artsworkindiana.org) and look for their latest postings and events.

Society’s relationship with media is a two-way street: Our attitudes are influenced by what we hear and see, and what we hear and see in media are influenced by attitudes. By changing perceptions off screen, we will hopefully begin to see more frequent and positive portrayals of people with disabilities on screen. \*

# Attitudes resources

## **Fifth Freedom**

fifthfreedom.org  
(260) 426-8789  
act@fifthfreedom.org

This statewide grassroots, cross-disability organization is dedicated to removing the physical and social barriers faced by people with disabilities. Fifth Freedom regularly sends ACTION Alert emails, and helps advocates join or start their own Advocacy Coordination Team (ACT).

## **AARP Indiana**

states.aarp.org/category/indiana

AARP Indiana helps amplify the voices of older adults on issues of retirement, financial and health security, long-term care, livable communities and consumer protection at the Indiana Statehouse.

## **The Indiana Citizens' Alliance for Transit (ICAT)**

indianacat.org  
info@indianacat.org

ICAT educates on the benefits of transit and advocates for the immediate development and ongoing support of comprehensive transit options in communities across Indiana.

## **Self-Advocates of Indiana (SAI)**

saind.org  
(317) 977-2375

SAI is the only statewide organization in Indiana run by and for people with developmental disabilities. The goal of SAI is to speak out and educate for equal rights, respect and inclusion in the community.

## **Mental Health America of Indiana (MHAI)**

mhai.net  
(317) 638-3501  
(800) 555-MHAI

With more than 60 local chapters and offices, this statewide organization works to increase understanding and acceptance of people with mental illness, promotes the use of the most appropriate treatments and services for people with mental illness, and advocates for reform of mental health public policy.

## **United Senior Action (USA)**

usaindiana.org  
(317) 634-0872  
info@usaindiana.org

USA is Indiana's statewide grassroots senior advocacy organization that works with Hoosier seniors to impact policies affecting their lives and communities, including home care and nursing home alternatives, health care issues and nursing home reform.

## **Indiana Home Care Task Force and Generations Project**

generationsproject.org  
(317) 441-3812

A collaborative effort of leading consumer-based organizations, this organization educates citizens, advocates and policymakers on the opportunities for Hoosiers to implement a balanced and responsible long-term care system in which home- and community-based services are the first and primary options for people with disabilities.

## **The Arc of Indiana**

arcind.org  
(317) 977-2375

The Arc of Indiana is committed to all people with developmental disabilities realizing their goals of learning, living, working and playing in the community. The Arc advocates for policy and legislation that supports this mission, and you can join their email list for up-to-date information through their website.

## **Indiana General Assembly**

in.gov/legislative  
House of Representatives:  
(317) 232-9600; (800) 382-9842  
Senate:  
(317) 232-9400; (800) 382-9467

Through this online portal, Hoosiers can learn about a bill's status, email or find more information about their legislators, check a committee schedule, and watch video or listen to live audio of the General Assembly online when it is in session.

## **United States Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)**

dol.gov/odep  
(866) 633-7365  
(877) 889-5627 (TTY)  
infoODEP@dol.gov

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) develops and influences disability employment-related national policies and practices to increase the employment of people with disabilities.

# 2012 CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

More than 400 people with disabilities, their family members, service providers and others came to downtown Indianapolis for the 2012 Conference for People with Disabilities, held Dec. 4 and 5. Themed "Community Connections," the event was Indiana's first livable communities conference and featured keynote presentations, interactive workshops and information sessions that inspired attendees to participate in their communities and advocate for change to make their communities more livable and enjoyable for everyone.

## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Conference attendees learned about the latest in assistive services, resources and technology from more than 30 exhibitors.



Tuesday evening's reception, themed "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," reminded Conference goers there's "No Place Like Home."



Participants expressed their viewpoints and opinions on livable communities via the seventh-annual disability poll.



# Jackson and Kent share thoughts on livability

Two nationally recognized speakers engaged attendees of the first livable communities conference with one central message – building better communities begins with livability.

## Richard Jackson, M.D.

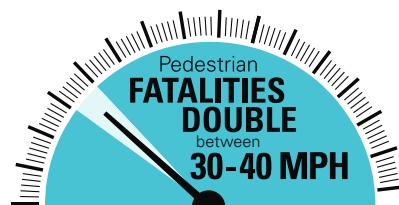
Dr. Richard Jackson, a UCLA professor and 2012 Conference keynote speaker, noted his appreciation for the Governor’s Council’s focus on making the entire state of Indiana a livable community. With an extensive background in public health and urban planning, he was glad to see the holistic approach the Conference took to advocate for smarter community design.

Jackson’s stunning statistics, shown to the right, were an eye-opener for many audience members.

“Spend our dollars first on preventive care and the rest on medical care,” Jackson stated. He reasoned better transportation, more environmentally friendly infrastructure and increased regular physical activity will help tackle the nation’s obesity and heart disease epidemics. Focusing on these issues will ultimately bring to light communities’ social priorities.

## Fred Kent

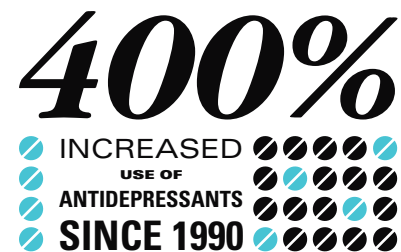
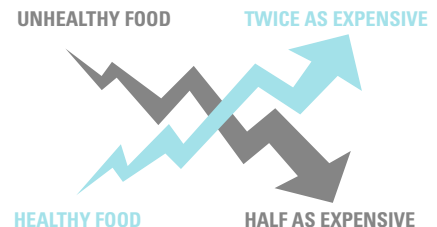
“When you design a community around cars...you get cars. When you design a community around people...you get people.”



Fred Kent, founder and president of Project for Public Spaces, is a leading authority on city revitalization, livability and smart growth. He closed the Conference by way of “creative placemaking” – designing public spaces that drive interaction, engagement and reasons for building community.

He has had a role in a multitude of civic projects since 1975, including the development of the Old Harbor district in Providence, R.I.; repurposing several public spaces in New York City, including Rockefeller Center, Bryant Park, Times Square and Central Park for added enjoyment; establishing Gabriel’s Wharf in London; and introducing movable chairs to Harvard University’s outdoor public spaces.

The reason why we don’t have better public spaces could be one of two factors: fear of



crime and isolation. Or, narrow development goals.

Kent said to remember the Power of 10 when building active public spaces. In each region, city, neighborhood, community and home, there should be 10 “destinations” (green space, art, street vendors or even your own bookcase). Water can entice anyone to touch, splash or drink it. Food easily beckons passers-by looking for refreshment. A 9-foot bench is much more capable of fitting different sets of people than a 4-foot bench. And, when a building’s entryway is situated at the corner of an intersection, it is much more likely to create a town square setting.

If you were a Conference attendee, let us know what you plan to do to make your community move livable! Contact [GPCPD@gpcpd.org](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.org). \*

# Making Indiana a livable community: Ideas to use and share

Livable community initiatives are springing up everywhere across the state. This year's Conference introduced the concept of building livable communities and how collaborative efforts can ensure people with disabilities are a part of the conversation.

## Indiana's livable initiatives panel

The second morning session of the Council's two-day Conference started with a panel discussion comprised of a regional mix of Indiana city leaders – mayors, city planners, human rights advocates and corporate partners. Panel members provided an insider's view of the inner workings of city planning and community development.

### Idea #1: ADA planning happens at the local level

Federal law mandates every city has an ADA compliance officer, and this individual should be a primary resource during metropolitan planning. Even if your city doesn't have a metropolitan planning organization, ADA standards must still be implemented.

Don't reinvent solutions to ADA accessibility problems. Call your city/county government to identify your ADA compliance officer and work with him/her. You can

also consult an ADA accessibility strategist or research different cities' initiatives online to learn best practices.

### Idea #2: Livability drives economic development

Couple a strong local arts program with accessible transportation and buildings, and soon you'll have a connected, interesting place to live – creating a strong driver for economic development.

### Idea #3: Livable community planners offer a wealth of backgrounds and experiences

Conference panelist Lorraine Smith is the human rights director and leads the mayor's advisory council on disability and community for Columbus, Ind. In this role, she serves as a catalyst for bringing together representatives of the disability community to solve local challenges.

Businesses can also be leaders in making a community more livable by being advocates of its assets. Cummins, Inc. has played an influential part in promoting the art and architectural history of Columbus, using it as a major selling point for its employees.

Most importantly, livable communities are created by people just like us. Reaching out to your neighbors, creating a support system and becoming involved in

local decision-making creates an enjoyable and safe place to live.

## Livable community initiatives

The Conference offered an abundant supply of ideas and techniques for creating livability.

- **Time-banking**  
An organized way of trading skills and having chores done without money changing hands. ([timebanks.org](http://timebanks.org))
- **Little Free Libraries**  
Dollhouse-sized lending libraries that are popping up on lawns in at least 24 states, including Indiana. ([littlefreelibrary.org](http://littlefreelibrary.org))
- **Indy Rezone**  
Offers a website discussing Zoning 101 and what's new in urban design. ([indyrezone.org](http://indyrezone.org))
- **Complete Streets**  
A statewide campaign to enable usability of our streets for all modes of transportation. ([healthbydesignonline.org](http://healthbydesignonline.org))

The Governor's Council wishes to thank everyone who participated in the Conference and looks forward to hearing more about the initiatives and creative thinking inspired by the event. \*



Members of the livable initiatives panel. L to R: Lorraine Smith, human rights director, Columbus, Ind.; Mayor John Wilkes, Linton, Ind.; Lewis Ricci, executive director, Indiana Arts Commission; Noble Stallings, community activist, Linton, Ind.; Tyler Kent, planner, Valparaiso, Ind.; Mayor Brooks Fetters, Huntington, Ind.; Gwen Langley, director of global community engagement, Cummins, Inc.; Phil Stafford, Ph.D., director, Indiana Institute on Disability and Community.



Workshops and informative sessions were offered on topics related to livability, community involvement and more.



Fun prizes were awarded during Tuesday's luncheon.



Starting dollhouse-sized Little Free Libraries was one of several topics on livability.



2012 Ms. Wheelchair Indiana Amber O'Haver poses with Donald Tinsley, winner of the 2012 Person with a Disability Distinguished Leadership Award.



Keynote sessions, workshops, exhibits and panel discussions helped make the 2012 Conference an informational and enjoyable time.



Workshops and panels were interactive and full of inspiring advice from the great mix of presenters.

ignite thoughts into action

# spark

We welcome your suggestions  
for newsletter content and  
ideas concerning the actions  
of the Council.

phone: (317) 232-7770  
email: [GPCPD@gpcpd.org](mailto:GPCPD@gpcpd.org)

[www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd)



**COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

Access, engagement and relationships. These are the vital links of a connected, livable community.

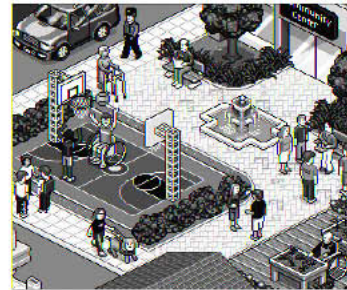
[IndianaDisabilityResource.org](http://IndianaDisabilityResource.org)



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