

Struxness Strikes Gold

13-year old Wyatt Struxness, a Jose Lopez Middle School student, is no stranger to competition. He's been competing at the National Junior Disability Championship for three years. This year the event was hosted in July by the Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association in Chicago, IL. And this year Wyatt Struxness brought home the gold.

Wyatt is a proud member of Kinetic Kids, a non-profit organization that offers sports and recreational activities for all abilities. He trains 3-4 times a week in his track chair for the 60, 100 and 200 meter events, as well as in the field chair for the club throw, softball throw, discus, shot put, and javelin. In the regional qualifying round, he brought home nine gold medals.

Despite winning gold in medals in the discus, softball throw and club throw, and silver medals in the shot put and the javelin, Wyatt sees a challenge ahead. "I came within an inch to breaking the national record in the club throw. Yeah, I was disappointed, but now I have something to motivate me even more during training for next year's competition." Wyatt encourages other children to follow their dream in sports. "I wouldn't be able to enjoy what I do in sports without Kinetic Kids. I love their field and track training, their wheelchair basketball, and wheelchair tennis too." Kinetic Kids offers a variety of athletic programs for kids to get involved.

Wyatt's Kinetic Kids Coach, Scott LeBlanc, was there for the victory. "I am very proud of Wyatt and his determination to go to this level of competition. Each year he becomes a better athlete and a competitor to watch. Not everyone can put hours and hours of training into one shot at a 1 to 2 minute race or have one throw out of six be the best to win. But Wyatt did, and that will always be a part of who he is - a Champion. I have told Wyatt to enjoy his triumph, because he deserves it. Train for tomorrow, with his main goal in mind, because only he can accomplish his dreams."

The competition, inviting physically chal-



Wyatt & teammate Daniel Velasquez at the 2010 National Junior Disability Championships

lenged athletes to compete in archery, swimming, table tennis, weight lifting, wheelchair tennis, and track and field events, is divided by the athletes' abilities and age group. Wyatt, who has cerebral palsy, met others in his age group with spina bifida, cerebral palsy, and amputees with prosthetics.

Wyatt's parents, Mary Ann and Art Struxness, see athletic competition as a long term endeavor for him. "He knows his physical limitations, but won't let them stand in his way. We will continue to support Wyatt so that he can have the fulfillment of reaching his goals. One of which is to be a member of the United States Paralympic Team." Wyatt agrees, "I plan to continue to train until next summer and do this year after year. I hope to one day become a mentor to younger athletes and offer them courage, help them to gain confidence and see them shine."

www.njdc2010.net

www.kinetickidstx.org

Link Up go online and activate

The digital age makes it easier than ever to get involved with advocacy groups. There are plenty of list-serves, programs, websites, blogs and applications providing information, and community support for disability groups and individuals. In January, CTD will introduce "Raise Your Voice!", a website that will allow you to make a difference by easily contacting your legislators. Here are some other sites to be aware of:

- www.topdisabilitywebsites.com - links from around the world to services for those with disabilities
- www.disability.gov - comprehensive disability-related information and resources.
- www.transitionsabroad.com/listings/travel/disability/keywebsites.shtml - travel websites for people with disabilities
- www.twitter.com/TxDisabilities and <http://www.facebook.com/TxDisabilities> - CTD's twitter and facebook links



Lights, Camera, Action! meet andrew

17-year old Andrew is a filmmaker. After his class finished up their study of A Tale of Two Cities, Andrew called "action" on a sequel, using a hand-held camera, a computer, and loads of talent and skill. Andrew rallied his attendants, friends and family to come together to star in the film, playing roles such as "the Vengeance" and Charles Darnay. He used dramatic lighting and special effects to give the action-packed film comedic effect.

You get a lot of laughs and thrills from the film, but what you may not see is just how impressive the filmmaker is. At the age of seven, Andrew was diagnosed with Duchene's muscular dystrophy. He feels blessed that he has been able to see how people with disabilities live day to day. This different perspective on the world helps Andrew understand life better and how to be kind and show compassion to others. Andrew intends on going to college to either study microbiology or psychology.

Learning to sing and playing the clarinet keep him occupied the rest of the time. Andrew's mother proudly adds, "I know that Andrew is capable of living out his big dreams and I am grateful for all the attendants, therapists, and actors who give so much and prove that this is so much more than a job." Will Andrew follow up with his filmmaking career? Let's hope so!

You can watch Andrew's video on http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5016KJvLc&h1=en_US&fs=1&rel=0.

Shoo Flu!

Don't want the flu this year? Join the club! Vaccinations are the single most effective way to protect against the flu! Don't want the shot? Ask to see if you're eligible for the nasal-spray flu vaccine, which is made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu.

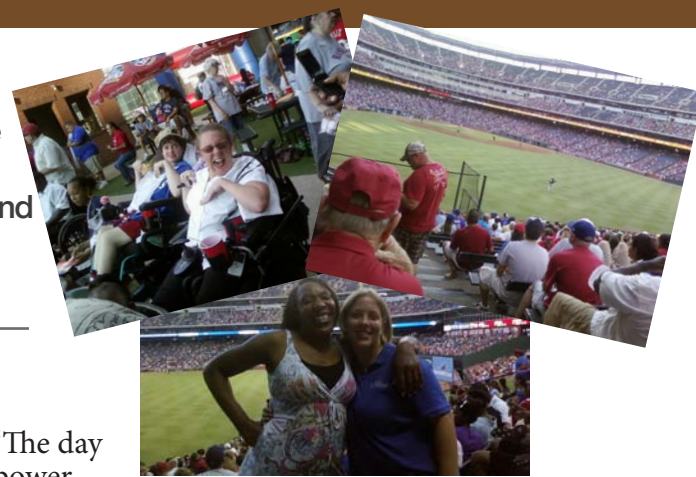
Find out where you can get your vaccine by visiting:

<http://www.flu.gov/widgets/vaccinelocator.html>

Don't wait! September is when the vaccines start rolling in, so get yours before the flu gets you!

Play Ball!

On July 27th, The Texas Rangers Women's Club invited the DSSW clients, employees, and family members to a Rangers game. They were treated to great seats, snacks and good times. To top it off, the Rangers beat the Oakland Athletics 3-1! They must have known we were coming!



White Cane Day

On Oct. 13, thousands of Texans with white canes and dog guides will gather for White Cane Day celebrations statewide. DARS mobility instructor Alison Behringer says the focus of the celebrations is on capability, not disability. "We want people to see the canes and the dogs as tools people use to get things done, not symbols of disability. We're not limited in any way. With these tools we travel, we ride buses, we cross city streets — whatever we need to do." The tough looking dog in shades logo with the slogan "Blind to the Bone" above it is catching on with participants and

non-participants alike. "The day is a statement about empowerment." Behringer hopes that those with blindness will think constructively about their adaptive equipment. The United States adopted "White Cane" laws addressing pedestrian safety and ensuring equal public access to people with dog guides, but the focus of White Cane Day has changed in recent years to incorporate new adaptive technology and evolving views of what people with disabilities can realistically expect from life. "...It's really more about showing people what's possible," Behringer said. "We

often start out with people who are reluctant to go out in public on their own. But once they get a taste of independence they want more and more. They say: 'I've learned I can do things I never believed I could. Now I want to find out what's next.'" For more information about White Cane Day events near you, contact your regional DARS office. On online directory is at www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs/DBSoffices.asp. General information is at www.whitecaneday.org.

Life Without Limits

Many of the goals set years ago for the full integration of individuals with disabilities into society have not been fully realized. There is still a very long way to go, and the Life Without Limits initiative and former Congressman Tony Coelho intend to tackle this problem head on. Since 2007, LWL has used technology to reach out to more than 176,000 to kick-start a dialogue about how we can best solve this problem.

Ruby's Bequest (care giving) is a unique collaborative storytelling experience for the public good in which tens of thousands of people will help forecast the future of caring in the United States. People of all backgrounds and experiences can share their concerns, questions and innovative solutions on topics ranging from elder care to Medicare and Social Security to time management and stress reduction. Utilizing new media to engage the general population could uncover new ways of thinking about the role of caring in our society. What are the best ways out there to care for people with Alzheimer's? Or cancer? Or post traumatic stress disorder? Thousands of people will answer these questions and add their own stories and work together via email, video, and phone, to imagine-and create-a new "ecosystem of caring." Ruby's Bequest project operators will then incorporate all these ideas into the ongoing narrative, generating collaborative solutions over time to manage the quality of life in the nation.

http://www.lifewithoutlimits.org/site/PageNavigator/LWL_Content/Rubys

My Child Without Limits

My Child Without Limits is a comprehensive informational and social networking resource for families and caregivers of children ages 0-5 with developmental delays or disabilities and for the professionals who work with them.

Visit mychildwithoutlimits.org for access to accurate, user-friendly, and relevant disability-related information, resource guides, and experts on early intervention and family support. The site also provides a forum for training staff and industry professionals and is a source of outreach materials for the larger care giving community and a moderated online community providing social networking for caregivers and family members through newsletters, blogs and discussion boards.

Save a Tree!
read us online

If you would like to receive this publication via email instead of a paper edition, please email us at caretx@dsswtx.org. Also, you may find all of our past newsletters online at www.dsswtx.org/caretx.

Attendant of the Year
nominations due

We are still accepting nominations for our Attendant of the Year award. If you feel you have an extraordinary attendant, please mail or email us with the reasons why. Tell us the story of your attendant and why they are so wonderful and your attendant could win a prize worth over \$250. Runner-Ups will also receive a gift.

**We want to
hear from
you!**

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