

The ADA twentieth anniversary

Twenty years ago on July 26, 1990, in front of 3,000 people on the White House lawn, George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). His directive? "Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down."

Similar to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, this landmark legislation's full title is "An Act to establish a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of disability." The ADA opened up doors for the over 54 million Americans with disabilities by barring discrimination in a wide range of areas.

In honor of the ADA's twentieth anniversary, let us revisit what it comprises. The ADA is broken up into five Titles:

Title I prohibits employers, including federal, state and local governments, from discriminating against qualified applicants and workers who are or who become disabled. The law covers all aspects of employment from the application process, hiring, and training to compensation, advancement, and any other employment term, condition, or privilege.

Title II prohibits state and local governments from discriminating against disabled persons in their programs and activities. For example, a city may not refuse to allow a person with epilepsy to use parks and recreational facilities. It also sets forth the structural accessibility requirements for public entities.

Title III prohibits private enterprises who provide public accommodations and services (e.g., hotels, restaurants, and transit systems) from denying goods, services and programs to people based on their disabilities. Title III also sets forth the applicable structural accessibility requirements for private entities. An interesting case is when two hotel room marketers (Expedia and Hotels.com) whose business presence is solely on the Internet



were sued because their customers with disabilities could not reserve hotel rooms through their websites without extreme effort that persons without disabilities did not have to perform.

Title IV makes available telecommunications devices and services for the hearing and speech impaired. These regulations created certain mandatory minimum standards telephone companies must maintain to be in compliance with the ADA.

Title V includes some miscellaneous provisions that relate to the construction and application of the ADA, including alternative dispute resolution.

For information about the ADA visit www.ada.gov. For more information on the ADA and its twentieth anniversary, including a campaign to proclaim recommitment to the Americans with Disabilities Act, visit www.adaanniversary.org.

Terrence Ealoms remembering a poet

Terrence Ealoms, also known as "T", was paralyzed, in 1997, at the age of seven after being run over by an underage driver out for a joy ride.

After the accident, his mother was unable to take care of him. His father had been incarcerated since he was a year old. Terrence was put in foster care. He battled depression and rage. But, through his struggles, Terrence found his calling. Poetry. Last year, with the help of his foster family, Terrence published *Echoing Faith*, a compilation of his painful and hopeful poems. Terrence passed away peacefully at 1:30 am on Sunday, June 20, 2010 at the age of 20.

Terrence overcame crushing adversity because he had something to prove to the world, new dreams to live, and an unbreakable spirit. His message to us all is to "never give up, follow your dreams, and stay tight y'all."

A special thanks to Steve and Judy Foster, Terrence's foster parents, for letting us publish some of Terrence's poems. For more information on Terrence's work, please visit www.ealoms.com.

Life's Reflection

In reality, I often feel burdened
Shattered living within a shell.
I may express these emotions with
Bitterness or rage.
Feeling as though I have a voice
That speaks in vain,
Unheard by those, in whose mercy I lay.
Disrupting their spirit like a fire
Burning through the forest.
They battled my madness and craze
Washing away the flame with
Encouraging words,
And cutting down my hostility,
With chainsaws of reality.
Keeping faith in me through
My burnt and fiery night.
Thinking of my many friends
Helping me see the positive
Side still living within.
I lay and thank them
For extinguishing my fury
Resting in the comfort of a new day,

Broken Freedom

With that last breath
I admit to you my loves,
Wishing to be at peace.
After so long,

Enduring,
Motionless
Abandoned
Isolated
Angry.

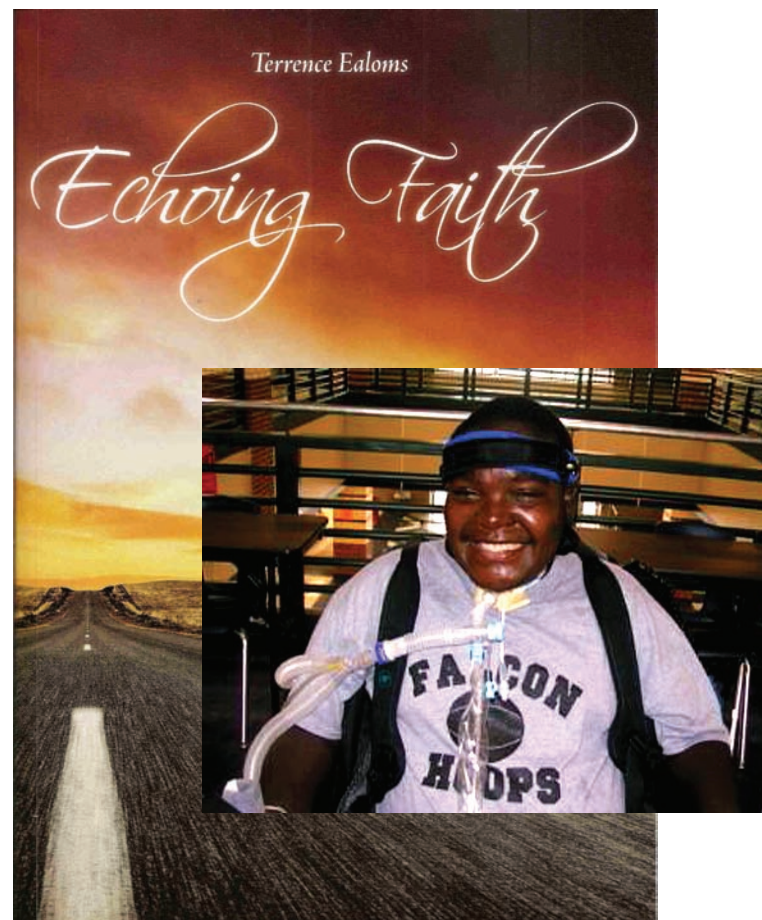
As I ascend
I feel joy.

Paralyzed,
Discarded,
By my mother...and others.
Reflections break my heart in two,
The rage I feel.

However death comes,
Just let it come.
Do not delay!

My life, a prison,
Freedom, disguised, in death,
And when it comes...
Celebrate!

For I will be in heaven,
Running too fast to notice your tears.



Austin Autism Bike Ride great cause, good exercise

DSSW's Austin agency recently participated in the Austin Autism Society Bike Ride supporting the Autism Society of Greater Austin (ASGA). Many riders and volunteers came to help build awareness of autism in their community. They raised more than \$5,000 to support ASGA's efforts like outreach programs to connect local parents and schools with autism information and local resources.

Way to go to all of DSSW's participants who took time from their busy lives to support a great cause...and burn some calories!



Conferences

Southwest Conference on Disability
October 6-8, 2010
Albuquerque, NM
<http://cdd.unm.edu/swconf/>

Too often we focus on what divides us. At the Southwest Conference on Disability, we explore what we have in common, and how we can create a mutual agenda that goes beyond a particular perspective, group or disability...

SABE National Self Advocacy Conference
September 23-26, 2010
Kansas City, MO
<http://www.sabekc2010.org/>

This year's theme is "Jazz It Up: Celebrating 20 Years of Self Advocates Being Empowered," which marks the anniversary of the ADA and acknowledges the last twenty years of the disability movement in the United States!

Corpus Christi our newest agency

DSSW/Lifespan is pleased announce the opening of another direct service agency in Corpus Christi. As of July 1st, our Corpus Christi location is approved to provide CLASS services as well as DBMD through DSSW and PCS and Private Duty Services through LifeSpan.

Doris Garza is DSSW's Program Director for our Corpus Christi office. She joined DSSW in December 2009 and came to us with several years of experience in various Community Care programs, such as CLASS, DBMD, PHC and PCS, in different roles. She is bilingual in English and Spanish and is a lifelong resident of the Corpus Christi area.

41st Annual Autism Society National Conference
July 7-10, 2010
Dallas, TX
www.autism-society.org

This conference addresses a range of issues, including early intervention, education, employment, behavior, communication, social skills, biomedical interventions and others, across the entire lifespan.

South Texas Family Support Conference
July 26-28, 2010
Kerrville, Texas
<http://www.stfsc.org/index.htm>

This conference has been highly successful in providing information and education to consumers, families and the community about mental health and developmental disabilities.

Thinking About PCS? think lifespan

Are you a current CLASS client who is thinking about switching your attendant care to Personal Care Services? If so, we want to inform you that our sister company LifeSpan provides PCS. This means you would not have to change your attendants and you would be dealing with the same office staff that assists you through DSSW.

Call 1-877-434-3153 for more information.

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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