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Editorial pages have VOICEYE codes for a new level of content access - *Enjoy*

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AN 'ADA' FOR THE WORLD

Dear *ABILITY* readers,

Thanks to the progress we've made since passing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) more than 20 years ago, millions of people have grown up proud of who they are, confident that the doors of opportunity are open to them. This landmark legislation was a major victory for equality, and helped to change the lives of millions of Americans who endured years of discrimination.

The ADA—America's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities—also established the United States as a world leader in protecting the rights of people with disabilities. It created a model for other countries to follow as they work towards inclusive societies free of physical and attitudinal barriers.

America's support for disability rights inspired a global movement that led the United Nations to adopt the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD). Through its adoption by countries around the world, the CRPD has the potential to improve protections for people with disabilities everywhere.

In addition to calling on countries to promote, protect, and ensure that people with disabilities enjoy full equality under the law, the CRPD has already begun to transform the way people with disabilities are seen. Just as the ADA helped to change Americans' attitudes towards people with disabilities, the CRPD is helping people globally to see friends, families and neighbors who have disabilities as full and equal members of society, deserving of fair treatment and equal opportunity.

Building on the work of the ADA, this vital treaty would help ensure that people with disabilities can enjoy equal access around the world. Joining the 145 countries that have already ratified the CRPD would not only benefit them, but also it would make it easier for Americans with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, to travel, study, and live abroad.

Many of the protections Americans with disabilities now enjoy, thanks to the ADA, do not exist in other countries. By ratifying the treaty, we can ensure that America has a seat at the table as countries around the world determine the best ways to make progress and remove barriers for all people.

Despite the fact that an American delegation working for George W. Bush negotiated and approved the CRPD, the treaty fell six votes short of approval when it came up for a vote in the Senate. Failing to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities was both inexcusable and embarrassing. I am hopeful, however, that the Senate can correct this grievous error by again taking up and ratifying the CRPD this year.

The reasons for ratifying this treaty are abundantly clear, but are perhaps best expressed by those who have the greatest personal stake in its approval by the Senate.

The personal story of Terhas Clark, a young woman who uses a wheelchair and interned in my office, speaks compellingly to the critical need to promote disability rights around the world.

Growing up in Ethiopia, she was denied access to primary school. When she came to the US, the ADA made it possible for her to access all aspects of life, including higher education. She's said that earning her degree was "the most incredible moment" of her life. She is now home in Ethiopia working to advocate for people with disabilities, and writes the following:

"Even today, teachers refuse to teach students with disabilities. They believe that the students are cursed by the devil, which is what they used to say about me as a child."

Terhas also explains how important access to public transportation is, saying that, thanks to the ADA, she was able to get around easily in the US. Without the CRPD in place, things are very different in other countries:

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"In Addis Ababa," Terhas went on, "I am completely denied access to transportation, and I have no legal basis to demand equal access to it. Every day, I see blind people, wheelchair users, and deaf people denied entry onto the buses. Lack of transportation for people with disabilities makes it impossible to function in society."

More than anything else, the ADA helped Terhas to feel "fully human" when she was in this country, she said:

"As a person with a physical disability, who travels, and currently lives in Ethiopia, the only place in the world that I have felt fully human was in America. The American society views people with disabilities as people. So often while I have been in Ethiopia, the people automatically view me as inferior."

Her story is not unique. To help this promising young woman and millions like her around the world, we must continue our leadership to ensure that they have a bright and promising future. We must ratify the CRPD this year.

Sharing personal stories of the millions of people with disabilities whom the CRPD would help is a powerful way to raise our voices and ensure that this treaty is ratified. That would send a powerful message to countries around the world that it's not okay to refuse to educate children because they are blind or deaf or use a wheelchair. We can say that it's not okay to prevent people with disabilities from voting, getting married, owning property, or having children. This is a matter of basic human rights, and now is the time to act so that we can extend the promise of the ADA to people with disabilities around the world. Together, I know we can ensure that the CRPD is ratified and made a reality.

Tell me your story on why Congress should ratify the CRPD by visiting:

harkin.senate.gov/help/crpdstories.cfm

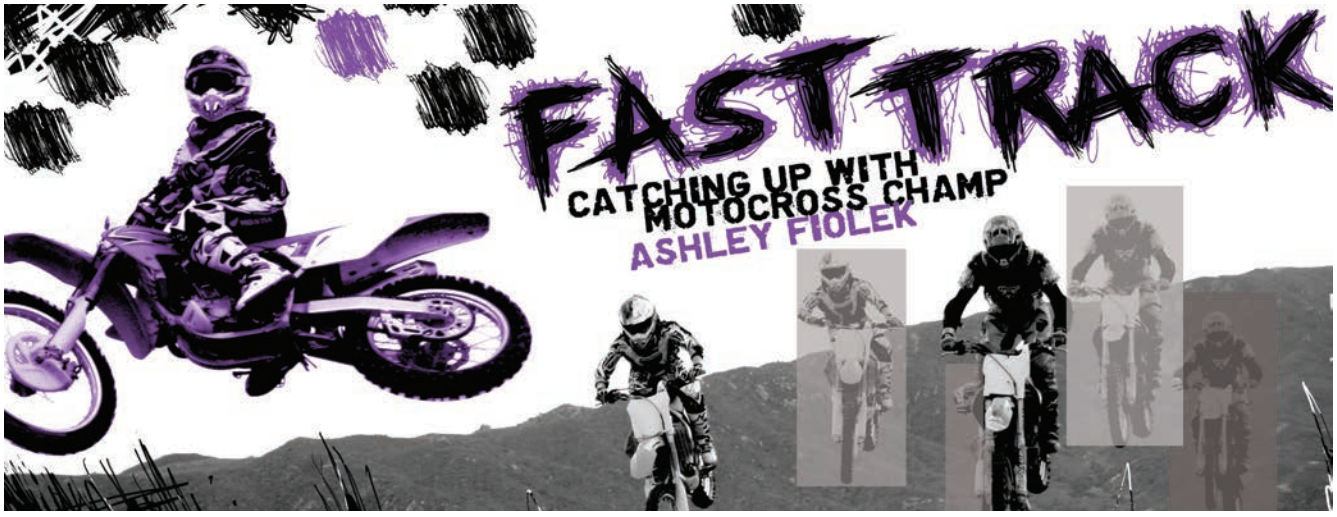
Sincerely,

Senator Tom Harkin

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) is Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee

harkin.senate.gov





I hadn't been riding that much since I left motocross in 2012, but this year I was eager to get back to it. So recently I've been out at the track more, where I've started a new relationship with the outdoor-product manufacturer Husqvarna. My agent spoke with the Husky people, and they were able to let me ride a 125 2 stroke, and I just love it! It's so much fun, the power is smooth and the bike is wicked fast! Even though I'm kind of small, the bike just feels right. It's super light and easy for me to whip it!



Taking the competition out of riding makes it even more fun. I can go when I want and ride with any of my friends. I still workout and train, but at my own pace. Everyone keeps asking me about racing. Although I don't plan to do any this year, I might sign on for special events, so watch my twitter, because I sometimes throw out there where I'll be riding and maybe you can come and ride with me, or just hang out and watch.

I have to admit that I've been a little bored since I stopped racing full-time, so I'm starting up the Ashley Fiolek Foundation. During my motocross years, I had opportunities to visit deaf schools and other organizations to talk to children about not giving up and always pursuing their dreams. It was a truly rewarding experience and I want to be able to continue doing that with the foundation. I've been working with my dad and my agent on this project. It's a slow process, but it's worthwhile and I'm sure it'll be awesome once everything is up and running.

The first of my ideas is the Dirt Bike Outreach (DBO) program. The idea behind it is to visit different organizations and speak to kids about their visions for their lives. My idea is to try and get them to understand that absolutely anything is possible, if you're willing to work hard and surround yourself with the right people. I want them to understand that racing a dirt bike for a professional team was my dream and even though some people said it wouldn't happen, it did!

When I finish the short DBO presentation, where I talk about how motocross changed my life, we'll all go out and ride dirt bikes. It'll just be a simple beginner course that gives kids a feel for how exciting riding can be. I don't expect anyone to become a racer from this program; I just want them to see my passion for riding, and get passionate about whatever it is in their life they like to do. That way they'll be able to make their dreams a reality, too. At the end of the day, I just hope it will be one of the best experiences they've had so far! ■ ABILITY



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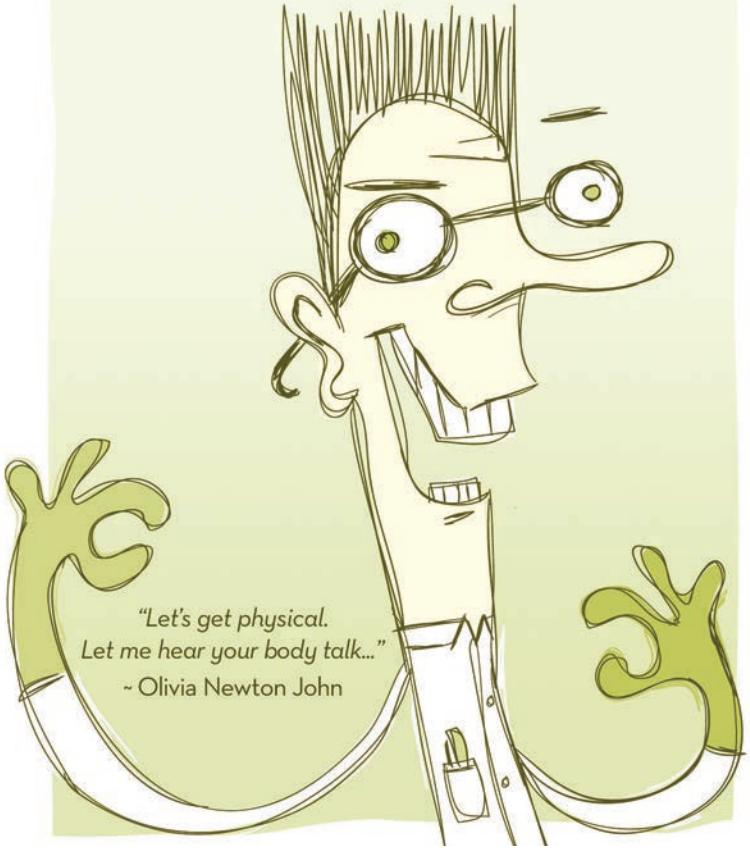
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You Crack My Back, *I'll Crack Yours*



Snap, crackle and pop is not just the sound you hear when you pour milk into Rice Crispies, it's how your body talks during physical therapy (PT). Actually, after a rigorous session of being man- or woman-handled, it's quite likely that you'll lack the strength to talk. Many disabled people are all too familiar with the world of PT; we've done our time.

PT was first recognized by the American Medical Association as a legitimate form of abuse—I mean treatment—in the early 1900's. PT has roots in both the Latin and Greek languages. The Latin being *painoneous* and *torturellia*, while in Greek it's derived from the words *punishamento* and *tormentia*.

PT gained momentum when it was discovered that exercise could strengthen deteriorating muscles and reestablish former capabilities. Henry Grabner of Palm Olive, FL, demonstrated the incredible potential of this technique when he lacerated his forearm while working at a pickle-slicing machine in a factory. As a result of nerve damage, he was unable to move his fingers. But after months of PT, he was not only able to go back to his pickle-slicing job, but also to pick up a baseball and throw like a girl. It was remarkable!

Soon Grabner's recovery exceeded even his doctors' wildest dreams, as the pickle-slicing, ball-throwing wonder exhibited uncanny dexterity during a two year purse-snatching spree. Thanks to PT, Grabner now delights his fellow inmates with a shadow-puppet show against prison walls as he awaits parole.

What does it take to be a physical therapist? A strong desire to help people, a strong mind, and a strong back. Since most of the patients in PT don't have the mobility to get from one place to another, their therapist is often required to lift them and situate them in an apparatus before the session begins. The therapist must perform this function because the room is too small to accommodate a tractor with a three-quarter inch plate and/or a forklift.

MORE BOUNCE TO THE OUNCE

Nearly a century after PT came into common use, a 1989 earthquake devastated parts of San Francisco's Bay Area. Early reports suggested a shift in the San Andreas Fault. However, upon closer inspection we learned that several fledgling therapists accidentally dropped a morbidly obese lady while transferring her from wheelchair to mat. This seismic event clocked in at 7.1 on the Richter Scale, one point for each of the seven petrified therapists as their arms gave way.

Lifting ability may be the top requirement of an up-and-coming therapist. As a matter of fact, six months of a PT's training involves pumping iron at Gold's Gym. Many PTs have even gone on to win bodybuilding contests. If lifting is done improperly, the role of a therapist may be relegated, in life, to that of therapee.

Almost every hospital is equipped with a PT department. Within it are various torture racks—I mean apparatus—to improve a patients' condition. The department also has a large supply of mats. They are intended for patients' use, but also do double duty when the therapist needs to catch 30 winks before the next patient arrives.

No PT department would be complete without parallel bars. For some reason, these tend to symbolize the success of taking a first step into a new life of walking and independence. (Unfortunately, most places in the outside world are not yet equipped with parallel bars, thus making walking rather hazardous except within the PT environment itself.) Walking is also limited there, as well, since the bars are only eight feet in length. However, you can never go wrong hanging around in these bars.

A walker is an essential tool, as well. This is the bridge from wheelchair to independent walking. The therapist is there to make sure that the patient does not "fall off the bridge." A walker has four legs on the bottom with a metal bar to grab at the top to steady the patient. This useful device was invented by an alcoholic named Amber Layten.

One afternoon, as Amber bicycled from pre-Happy Hour to Happy Hour—two events he rarely never missed—he rounded the corner and was forced to swerve to avoid running over Miss McWiggins. The near catastrophe caused him to crash through the front window of a pub. His bicycle collided with a barstool. With his handlebars permanently implanted in the stool, Amber now had a convenient device to steady him for his inebriated journey home. Thus the origin of the "Amber Layten" walker was born. Of course, Mr. Layten himself didn't test out the new invention until after last call.

HOW THERAPISTS GET CRACKIN

While a therapist gets roughly six years of schooling and a one-year internship, most are not adept at understanding the limitations of each muscle and bone. Therefore, a shriek by the patient is extremely helpful. If stretching isn't done, or is performed adequately during the immobilization period, the patient can face severe consequences down the road. Ask baseball pitcher Joe Hocker.

Known to his teammates as "Spitfire," Hocker was involved in a serious cart accident. During a game against the Ohio Buckteeth, he suffered whiplash on the way out to the mound, when his cart accidentally ran over the team mascot, Freddie "The Dancing Trout," instantly killing him.

At Shucks Stadium, a 30-foot toilet was erected in center field, where Freddie's life was memorialized, followed by a ceremonial flush. The crowd was silent, but still managed to do the wave. Hocker, on the other hand, faced challenges with getting treatment because each time his therapist tried to stretch his injured neck, he inadvertently spit on her. One night, Hocker dreamed that he was in the World Series, but he never awoke to fulfill his dream, the old "Spitfire" having drowned in his own saliva.

Sports-related injuries are quite common in the United States. It's not unusual to find PT departments literally crawling with athletes, ex-athletes, macho men and husbands trying to prove that they're not over the hill. The therapist is most sympathetic to the latter.

Aquatic therapy is used quite extensively for therapeutic purposes as a means of developing motion and strength within a non-gravity environment. Pool therapy was widely used during the years when polio infected the central nervous systems of young children causing paralysis. Although most children didn't realize the severity of the disease at the time, they worked hard to regain their strength and managed to find time to play in the water.

One of the games invented was by a 7-year-old boy named Markie Owens. The object was for one person to close their eyes and yell "Mark O," and then try to find the other players when they answered "Polio!" This game is still played to irritate people who work hard all year and wish to have one quiet day by the pool.

OLGA INVENTS A NEW SPORT

An Olympic sport was derived from this pool therapy. In 1938, 4-year-old Sally Mander was in her wheelchair next to the pool waiting for her therapist Olga, a Hungarian immigrant who'd been trained in men's shot putting. Suddenly Sally went off the deep end, slithered into the pool and began to drown. Olga, arriving just in time, dove in the water, hoisted Sally on her shoulder, and heaved her onto dry land. Unfortunately, Olga did not realize her own strength, and threw the small child across the street into the net of a nearby soccer goal. Spectators marveled at the feat and started a neighborhood league that rapidly spread throughout the country; the new sport was called Water Polio.

PT has come a long way since the late 1930's. We now know more about the human body and how it works than ever before. Many new techniques and treatments have been introduced. Among them is Functional Electrical Stimulus (FES), which helps the inactive muscle contract without the patient's cognitive process needing to be involved. FES helps prevent muscle atrophy and/or osteoporosis, the decaying of bone tissue.

Electrodes are placed in precise spots on the dormant muscle, while a current of electricity is shot into the flesh. This handy technique also led to the invention of the electric chair ™. The therapist adjusts the voltage by an exact measurement known as the EBF (Eye Bulge Factor). After shock therapy, the patient is sent to Miss LaWanda's hair salon so that the hairs standing on end can be styled into an attractive coif.

Therapists and the patients work closely together. Sometimes too closely. Occasionally, PT and patient fall in love. Some early signs of this include: 1) bedside sessions that occur more frequently; 2) a patient is scheduled for eight hours of therapy a day; 3) therapy takes place in the hospital linen closet. Perhaps the most overt signal that the patient/therapist relationship has crossed professional boundaries is when the therapist wears a thong bikini and is found astride the patient's back, delivering deep-tissue massage.

All in all, PT has done wonders over the years. It's often taken the "dis" out of disabled; helped millions of people to get back on their feet again so that they can walk to the refrigerator, engorge themselves, and then sit on their butts watching cycling through TV channels on the remote.

PTs should be admired for the fantastic job they do—they listen to ungrateful patients moan, groan, ache, cry and whine, which is why they are so motivated to get their patients up on their feet and out of the hospital stat.

■ ABILITY

by Jeff Charlebois



Check out Jeff's hilarious new book
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THE Boomer Range

Have you ever woken up and wondered how you got to be so old? I'm going to be 58 this year, and although some people say it's the new 38, that doesn't change the reality that I'm among the last of the Baby Boomer generation.

Growing up in a middle class American family allowed me to acquire cherished memories of a life that kids today will never appreciate, nor fully understand. Many of the things that shaped our lives in years gone by, are now considered to be the dinosaurs of yesterday. Meanwhile, technology speeds us through life.

Are you old enough to remember the excitement of going to a drive-in movie? Back in the day, we'd get in our jammies, fill the car with pillows and blankets, bring homemade popcorn and drive into a big lot with a huge screen at the front of it. To hear the movie, we'd hang the speaker in the window and excitedly wait for the picture show to begin. But there wasn't just one movie; we'd see a "double feature"—plus a brand new cartoon as a prelude! This was when the cost of movie night rarely exceeded $12 and there was money left over!

On summer evenings, I remember going for rides in the family car, cruising along with no particular destination in mind. We'd crank the windows down, and let the wind caress our faces as we watched the world drift by. And of course, we'd stop for ice cream somewhere along the way. We'd arrive home, never concerned that we'd wasted a tank of gas, which was less than a $1 a gallon, or that we'd almost gotten lost at a time when a GPS system was unheard of. Even if we did get turned around on occasion, there was no anxiety; we savored the thrill of discovering a road less traveled.

In the 60's and 70's, there were no mobile or smart phones. All we had was a stupid wall phone mounted in the kitchen. It was covered with greasy hand prints and a cord that got so tightly tangled that it never stretched long enough to reach the privacy of a bedroom.

I don't even have memories of wanting to call anyone until high school. Back then, if I needed privacy, I'd ride my bike to a phone booth with a pocketful of dimes. The phone booth has largely disappeared from our lives. Think fast, where and when did you last see one? I bet you can't remember, can you?

As a child, I had a fondness for writing. In 1969, when I was 13, all I wanted for Christmas was an electric typewriter. Sure, my family owned a manual one, but having cerebral palsy made it difficult for me to use it. So I was thrilled that year when an electric typewriter appeared under the tree. Back then, it never occurred to me that the typewriter—electric or manual—would ever become extinct. The last typewriter I owned was in 1983. I donated it to Goodwill Industries and subsequently replaced it with a word processor—and then a computer!

Of course, these are only a few of the items that are no longer. There are other things that were equally important in shaping how I grew up, but I'm happy to live without them. I'm talking Hostess cupcakes, Twinkies, fruit pies, snowballs, Thomas Guide Maps and transistor radios.

Remember Earth Shoes, Sting Ray bicycles and strap-on roller skates? Crackerjack boxes with prizes were actually pretty cool, or lava lamps, which never actually cast enough light in a room to read by, but then who wanted to read when you could space out in a beanbag chair and daydream?

The only high I experienced growing up was from the sugar rush of M&Ms. I would separate the different colors and put them in empty pill bottles, as if they were prescription drugs. But the truth is, I stayed on the straight and narrow, focused on someday becoming an actress and a writer. As I compose this—having exceeded so many of my daydreams—I wonder if I could have accomplished as much if I'd been distracted by today's constant pursuit of instant gratification. I probably could have, but never with the sweetness and innocence of growing up a Boomer. ■ ABILITY

by Geri Jewell

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Carpe Dia!

FOR HEARING WOMAN, SIGN LANGUAGE HOBBY BECOMES CAREER

Diana "Dia" Gaitirira learned American Sign Language (ASL) as a teenager back in Palm Bay, Florida, where her childhood church had an enticing social calendar:

"They would make these announcements:'Deaf Ministry picnic next week,' or 'Deaf Ministry volleyball.'" So Gaitirira (*pronounced guy-ta-ree-ra*) used the international symbols for, "Can I play volleyball with you guys?" by pointing to herself and then putting her hands together like she was about to bop a ball over the net. And members of that ministry communicated back with smiles that read: "Of course you can play with us."

Simply by hanging out, she made lots of friends and got more involved with helping to interpret music—and occasionally a sermon. "I thought, I love doing this; I'm going to go to college and make a career of it."

After earning an associate's degree from Brevard Community College in Palm Bay, she continued her education at Hillsborough Community College's Interpreter Training Program (ITP) in Tampa, with a mind towards further study. Intent upon upping her game, she made the bold move of applying to Gallaudet University, a federally funded chartered school for the Deaf and hard of hearing in Washington, DC. "I wanted to be the best and surround myself with Deaf people," she recalls. The school had a special program called Hearing Undergraduate Students (HUGS), and at the time they only allowed five hearing students into the program, she says. The year she applied, she was not among the chosen few.

Undeterred, Gaitirira moved from Florida to Gaithersburg, Maryland, to be closer to the school "because I was determined to get in." To fill the time until she could reapply, she participated in an internship at one of Washington, DC's interpreting agencies, which eventually hired her. Two years later, when Gallaudet increased its spots for HUGS from 5 to 15, Gaitirira was among the freshman class.

She majored in Deaf studies, and found that her favorite course was ASL Literature with Professor Ben Bahan. In his class, none of their homework was written, instead "we turned in all of our assignments on videotape," she says. She found her American Deaf History course similar to typical American history classes in that the people they learned about were mostly white, which frustrated her.

"A culturally and ethnically diverse group of heroes should be included in the curriculum of all mainstream schools," she asserts. She does, however, remember enjoying classes in Asian Deaf Studies, African-American Deaf Studies, "and a fabulous class called Dynamics of Oppression."

Being at the highly regarded Gallaudet created opportuni-



ties for her to meet modern day Deaf individuals whom she admires, including performer Warren "Wawa" Snipe, the Invisible Hands troupe, which mixes ASL and dance, along with the troupe's artistic director Fred Beam.

"I also met the first African-American Deaf lawyer Claudia Gordon; she recently went on to work at the White House," Gaitirira says.

As a hearing person at a Deaf university, she occasionally ran into prejudice. Similar to how a non-black person might encounter resentment at a historically black college or university, she found that the reaction of some people at Gallaudet was less than welcoming. "What are you doing here?" they wanted to know. "I got resistance from some who gave me the feeling that I didn't belong, like the university was just for them."

She would have good days and bad days, and often found herself explaining: "You want more people out here who can sign clearly and have good training, so I'm here to be a better signer, which you say you don't have enough of." She took the reactions in stride, however, telling naysayers: "Hey, get over it, so I can learn and go out into the world and improve services for Deaf people."

Like many college campuses, she found cliques: The international Deaf hung out with each other; the hard of hearing, who relied more on their voices, stuck together; the "generationally" Deaf, whose parents and grandparents were also Deaf, formed a community; and people of Caribbean and African heritage often gravitated towards one another.

Gaitirira thinks she might have formed closer friendships if she'd had more time to hang out, but she was going to school and working full time, while volunteering in the community. Yet she acknowledges that this was a "first-world problem," because a lot of countries don't let people with disabilities go to school at all.

Now that she's graduated and moved on, Gaitirira has a fuller appreciation of the culture at her alma mater: "One of the things I miss about being there is the theater. They did Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* in complete sign language, and the traveling Deaf West Theater, which played Washington's Lincoln Theater, mixed Deaf and hearing actors in a production of *Big River.*

ASL is not Gaitirira's first foray into languages. Her roots are Haitian, and members of her family speak the country's official language, French, and also Creole, based largely on 18th-century French and a mix of West African languages. Then, while she was living in Maryland, she met future husband, Allan Gaitirira, who hails from Kenya and knows Swahili, as well as Kikuyu, a language of the Bantu family spoken by about 6 million Kenyans, more than 20 percent of the country's population.

At home the Gaitiriras have created their "own little secret language that's a little bit of everything," the



interpreter says. “Deaf culture is absolutely beautiful, and similar to African culture, because your heritage is passed down through storytelling.” The couple taps into their love for a well-told tale through their film production company, Cheza Jouer Films.

While Allan is a business accounts manager, Dia left Gallaudet with a Bachelor of Arts in Deaf Studies and found that graduating from such a prestigious university put her in line for a number of exciting opportunities. “When I apply for a job I usually get it,” she says.

She got a chance to do interpreting for passengers on military helicopter rides, at concerts and in dance classes; she had assignments with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the White House and the Pentagon, helping to keep the lines of communication open at meetings, briefings, workshops, trainings and speeches.

She’s even used her skills in Emergency Room (ER) hospitals; helped with labor and deliveries; and interpreted in myriad other medical situations.

“There was one DC/Metro area agency that had a program called Baby Watch, where the Deaf client would pick two to three of their favorite interpreters, with one being the primary interpreter for their pregnancy.” She was present at the mother-to-be’s office or emergency visits, and during the actual labor.

“I had the pleasure of being picked as a primary a few times, I was flooded with emotions, excitement and stress. Every time I felt as though I was expecting a child because even when I was off duty, I would think: “What if my client delivers tonight? Am I ready? Did I pack my interpreter bag (deodorant, snacks, toothbrush, toothpaste and an extra outfit)?” As interpreters we’re trained to be neutral and invisible entities that relay information between two or more parties, but when there’s a baby on the way, it’s sometimes hard just to be the conduit.”

As they navigated the working world on the east coast, Gaitirira and her then-new husband found themselves looking for a change. They began exploring less expensive places to live than the nation’s capital, and after she got an interpreting assignment at a conference in Albuquerque for a week, the couple got a good look at the Duke city and began to meet people. By the time the conference was over, the Gaitiriras were sold on the Southwestern city, packed up and moved to Albuquerque. That was six years ago.

Dia Giatirira started out interpreting in an educational setting, from kindergarten to the university level, but found her niche in medical interpreting, her current career. She helps patients during doctors’ appointments, in the ER, and even in the operating room. But she doesn’t do legal interpreting because she has a difficult time comprehending the concepts, which puts her at a disadvantage in trying to communicate them to someone else. As someone who loves theater and music, however, she enjoys interpreting at concerts, where “you use your body more, swaying, and stretching out the signs rather than the more staccato style used while talking.”

While she’s not a rock star, Gaitirira sometimes feels like one: “When you tell people what you do—interpret for people who are Deaf or Deaf-blind—they treat you differently, because it’s one of the helping professions. They say, ‘Oh, wow, you do that?’ And they really respect it; they see it as selfless.”

It’s also a specialty that few can do, which makes her highly employable. Gaitirira uses her interpreting not only in medical and educational settings, but also in cultural ones, such as Black History Month events.

These days the Gaitiriras have their eyes on their budding acting careers. In recent years, New Mexico has become a go-to place for productions. Recently Dia was cast in the new NBC medical show, *The Night Shift*, which shoots in Albuquerque. Her dream role would be to get cast on ABC Family’s *Switched at Birth*, about two girls—one Deaf and one hearing—who end up being handed over to the wrong set of parents by the hospital, but who eventually meet and come together as friends. For Gaitirira, that scenario is the best of both worlds. ■ ABILITY

Dia Gaitirira, has a Certification of Interpretation (CI) and a Certification of Transliteration (CT), which means she’s qualified to interpret in American Sign Language (ASL) and Signed English. ASL is a derivative of French Sign Language and uses English words but doesn’t follow English word order; it also uses facial expressions and body movement as grammatical markers. Signed English uses exact English word order, while Pidgin Signed English is a combination of both ASL and Signed English. A fourth dialect, used by the Deaf-blind community, is called Tactile Interpreting and is a method of signing and spelling letters in the hands and on the body of the client.

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SINGING TO THE HEAVENS

A little over 900 miles southwest of Beijing, China, in the shadow of the Taihang Mountain range, you will find a small open-air courtyard. Inside its walls, a musical instrument, tea and tobacco lie on an old table, surrounded by eight blind artists. They are members of the Shanxi Zuoquan Blind Publicity Team, and just beyond them are a group of excited village folks who anticipate the troupe's performance.

The old men light cigarettes, sucking on their addiction as tobacco smoke swirls over their heads. Some squat next to the courtyard wall to enjoy a lunch of noodles, talking with their mouths full, as the singers warm up. The latter are accompanied by musicians who play bright notes that drift off into the distant mountains. Liu Hongquan, the captain of the group bangs his drum, and



Photography Correspondent, Zhang Heyong





the other instruments obediently follow suit, joyously playing to the beat. They sing familiar lyrics:

Pass a county and there's another village
Start playing the huqin (oh God)
And go west all day long
Use the clouds as blankets and mountains as beds
With warmth leaving comes the cold (oh God)
I travel the Taihang

The Blind Publicity Team was established in 1938 to protest the Japanese during a military conflict between China and Japan. It was China's Anti-Japanese Democratic Government that allowed the singers to have their very own organization, but back then the troupe also had to fish for information to help out. Today, 75 years later, there are six generations of the Blind Propaganda Team.

Over the course of a year, they walk through 360 villages in Zuoquan County, and wherever they walk, they sing beautiful songs in exchange for a bowl of warm food and shelter from the rain. Zuoquan County has high mountains, deep valleys and mostly rocky roads. Few people with disabilities walk its paths. A single stick leads two people: One holds it, the other other puts a hand on his shoulder and that's how they are strung together like pearls, carefully moving along. After encountering snow or rain, one slip and they could easily fall into a heap.

They walk for two weeks at a time, trekking through mountain village after village, day after day, year after year. In addition to giving them 200-Yuan ($32) to 300-Yuan ($48) per performance, the villagers also arrange room and board for the performers. At every home they enter, they are offered food, which they gratefully accept. After eating a home-cooked meal, the artists radiate happiness and stand up straighter.

The first 10 years of the troupe's existence, however, the performers had to beg to survive. When they walked up to a village, they ran the risk of vicious dogs pouncing on them. If the villagers were warm and wanted them to stay, then they would stay and perform. If they said they were busy, then the group would go on to the next village.

THE SINGERS STORIES

"Who says that red are the peach blossoms, white are the apricot blossoms? Living a whole life blindly, I have never seen this."

The lyrics "red are the peach blossoms/white are the apricot blossoms" is from a Chinese folk song. In the artists group, there is wistfulness when they sing the words.

In a lonely and remote village, a flawed body is considered to be as unimportant as a fallen leaf. Nobody will remember their real names and will just call them "old blind." But these "old blinds" are all survivors. Captain Wang Zhongyuan, 61, had been a carpenter. While he was digging up a tree root, a detonator went off and he lost his hands and sight.

At 60 years old, Zhang Linqing was originally a very well-known "Little Revolution Path Breaker." When he was 21 he was taking part in an agricultural studies competition, when a ditch rock blast injured his hands and eyes.

Liu Shuangming, 44, lost his sight because of optic atrophy. His wife quickly divorced him and took their daughter with her. In the group of 11, nine are alone and do not have a family; some don't have any relatives at all.

Liu Hongquan's mother is deaf. In the 1970s, when the Blind Publicity Team came to his community, Liu pulled her by the arm to go listen to the troupe perform; for him this is an important childhood memory. It also planted a dream within him to travel with the team. But his father was adamantly against the idea. His father thought nothing good would come of it.

Liu studied at a Braille school for 10 years. After graduation, he did massage at the provincial capital. The income was decent. A few times he took out his huqin and accompanied himself as he sang, which his boss strongly criticized. The artist wanted so much to go back to the mountains and sing and then, in 1995, not even a month after his father's death, he joined the Blind Publicity Team and became its lead singer. To fulfill this dream, he even broke off his relationship with his girlfriend.
A love of music joins the singers in this nomadic



lifestyle. Everyone is an autodidact, but the music they create is very pleasant to the ear.

Authentic Shanxi legend flowering tunes, sung by generations of blind artists, coupled with meaningful lyrics provide the perfect medium for the human voice. The mountain people love listening to "The Bitter Bachelor," whose lyrics go like this:

Plum blossom flowers on the first month
everyone loves the opening of the flower.
The bachelor has the heart to pick one.
Though he takes the bloom home
there is no one to give it to.

The lyrics are colorful, but the pain is piercing.

Having each other makes everything easier. Currently, the 11-person team is divided into two groups that chain walk the rural villages. Every member earns around 1000-Yuan ($160) per month. No matter what Li Yongbing is singing, he always has a sweet face. Wang Yuzhong not only has enough cigarette money, but can also send some funds home to his children. Liu Shuangming is the last one to join the team and is committed to staying on.

LIVING *AH BING*

There is a saying: "The world outside of the mountains is said to be good, but blind peoples' minds are better singing inside the mountains."

During the summer of 2003, Liu Hongquan's elder brother, Liu Hongqing, followed Professor Tian Qing to collect some folk songs from Zuoquan. On a dilapidated ancient stage, under the dim lighting, the younger brother's song, "Bitter Bachelor," brought Tian to the point of tears. This song also touched the elder brother, Liu Hongqing, who had been standing still, listening in a dark corner.

Back when Liu Hongquan was in elementary school, his teacher would use dialects to recite poetry with such phrases as "snowcapped, boundless wild." But the neighborhood children would use poetic phrases to loudly mock Liu Hongquan by reciting, "Blind Aiai; blind, blind eyes." Aiai was his mother's name.

Living in that environment made Liu Hongquan's heart ache. His elder brother desperately fled from home and was eager to make something of himself, while Liu Hongquan was eager to stay put and prove his worth. If not for the night when the elder brother heard the younger brother's song, their hearts would not have come together.

Back in Beijing, Tian wrote, "Ah Bing is still alive." He used the term "Bing" to describe the group of musicians hidden in the Taihang Mountains; when they landed in the capital, Beijing, they introduced "Original Storm" music, which received very high praise from China's musicians. After that, Tian took the artists to perform all around Beijing.

After coming back to the mountains, this group was given special treatment and thunderous applause wherever they went. The artists really did sing until the sun started blooming: Over the course of 10 years, they have earned a retirement pension, moved from a dilapidated stage to a courtyard; obtained subsidized housing; performed widely; been given 20,000 Yuan (more than $3200) in funding by the China Disabled Art Troupe; and starred in movies.

While they have had much good fortune, they worry that the next generation may not take the torch and carry it on. The young singers and musicians who are blind come for a few days, but then they leave. They can earn a lot more money, more quickly giving massages in the city.

Despite being admired on the screen and being lyrical on paper, the artists still maintain their simple mountain folk ways. Performing under the bright lights of a music hall in Beijing recently, they wore new red suits. They were both excited and restrained. They couldn't even feel carefree playing the huqin. Placed in the center of the stage, they were pulled this way and that to take photos with various leaders. Said one: "Exchanging greetings with leaders made me feel that my manners were all bottled up in Taihang Mountain." ■ ABILITY

by Feng Huan

This story is part of a series of articles published as an exclusive editorial exchange between *China Press for People with Disabilities/Spring Breeze* and *ABILITY Magazine*



my DUMBEST ride yet!

I just finished a brilliantly idiotic extreme Iron Butt ride to benefit the National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society!

I first received an invite to a gathering of motorcycle long distance riders, called a RTE, or *ride* to eat. Riders are invited to a restaurant most likely very far from wherever they call home to kick tires and break bread with other long distance riders. Boasting rights went to rider who rode the longest distance to get there of course!

Sponsored by the Iron Butt Association, they named this one the MEAT LOVERS RTE. The email boasted a famous Chicago entrée of "an obscene five pounds of ground sausage, pork and beef mixed with spices and wrapped in a weave of brown sugar bacon, slow cooked on a pig roaster." The rest of the menu was carnivorous. as well.

My keyboard short-circuited from the au jus drool, *and I was using my iPad*. Never *ever*, read emails when you are hungry.

The event also had a special Iron Butt certification for anyone who documented riding 1,000 miles or more in under 24 hours to the event... Hmm, a quick check on my mapping program found Chicago was precisely 1,040 miles from my house.

It was like the bacon was taunting me.

I checked my schedule. I could ride through Friday night and arrive in plenty of time for the 6:oo pm dinner in Chicago on Saturday. Another 1,000 mile push on Sunday and make it home in time for work Monday morning. It would be tough, but I figured I could make it. If it had been in the middle of the summer when my multiple sclerosis symptoms are affected by heat, I may not have registered. But,it was in May, so I sent my registration in and looked forward to diner in Chicago.

Unfortunately, the first invite was just a hook, a cruel bait and switch tactic used only by rogue CIA operatives, used car salesman and Rally wizards like Evil Lord Kneebone, the grandmaster of all that is motorcycle endurance riding. Mike is a great guy, a friend, and the President of the Iron Butt Association; the worldwide organization dedicated to safe, long distance motorcycle riding.

A day after registering for the Meat Lovers 1000, I saw Mike's real challenge.

Coincidentally, by no rhyme or reason, a second slightly frightful challenge just happened to take place over the same weekend; called the International Scooter 1000 Insanity. The rules were quite loudly simple.

Called *Scooter Insanity*, because most normal riders wouldn't attempt a 1,000 mile day on a motorcycle, never mind doing it on a scooter. Well, the title of the challenge is justified. And may I remind you, I know a guy who rode a Russian Ural in the 11 day 11,000 mile Iron Butt Rally. Scooters are fun to zip up and down the beach roads and on sidewalks and across college campuses, but they are not suited for long highway jaunts for 18 hours at a stretch. They don't even have a clutch for God's sakes!

If I rode a scooter in the woods and nobody saw me,



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AMPYRA may cause serious allergic reactions. Stop taking AMPYRA and call your doctor right away or get emergency medical help if you have shortness of breath or trouble breathing, swelling of your throat or tongue, or hives.

Please see the full Patient Medication Guide on the following page.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

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Read this Medication Guide before you start taking AMPYRA and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or your treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about AMPYRA?
AMPYRA can cause seizures.
- You could have a seizure even if you never had a seizure before.
- Your chance of having a seizure is higher if you take too much AMPYRA or if your kidneys have a mild decrease of function, which is common after age 50.
- Your doctor may do a blood test to check how well your kidneys are working, if that is not known before you start taking AMPYRA.
- Do not take AMPYRA if you have ever had a seizure.
- Before taking AMPYRA tell your doctor if you have kidney problems.
- Take AMPYRA exactly as prescribed by your doctor. See "How should I take AMPYRA?"

Stop taking AMPYRA and call your doctor right away if you have a seizure while taking AMPYRA.

What is AMPYRA?
AMPYRA is a prescription medicine used to help improve walking in people with multiple sclerosis (MS). This was shown by an increase in walking speed.

It is not known if AMPYRA is safe or effective in children less than 18 years of age.

Who should not take AMPYRA?
Do not take AMPYRA if you:
- have ever had a seizure
- have certain types of kidney problems
- are allergic to dalfampridine (4-aminopyridine), the active ingredient in AMPYRA

What should I tell my doctor before taking AMPYRA?
Before you take AMPYRA, tell your doctor if you:
- have any other medical conditions
- are taking compounded 4-aminopyridine (fampridine, 4-AP)
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if AMPYRA will harm your unborn baby. You and your doctor will decide if you should take AMPYRA while you are pregnant.
- are breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. It is not known if AMPYRA passes into your breast milk. You and your doctor should decide if you will take AMPYRA or breast-feed. You should not do both.

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take, including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them and show it to your doctor and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take AMPYRA?
- Take AMPYRA exactly as your doctor tells you to take it. Do not change your dose of AMPYRA.
- Take one tablet of AMPYRA 2 times each day about 12 hours apart. Do not take more than 2 tablets of AMPYRA in a 24-hour period.
- **Take AMPYRA tablets whole. Do not break, crush, chew or dissolve AMPYRA tablets before swallowing. If you cannot swallow AMPYRA tablets whole, tell your doctor.**
- AMPYRA is released slowly over time. If the tablet is broken, the medicine may be released too fast. This can raise your chance of having a seizure.
- AMPYRA can be taken with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of AMPYRA, do not make up the missed dose. Do not take 2 doses at the same time. Take your next dose at your regular scheduled time.
- If you take too much AMPYRA, call your doctor or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- Do not take AMPYRA together with other aminopyridine medications, including compounded 4-AP (sometimes called 4-aminopyridine, fampridine).

What are the possible side effects of AMPYRA?
AMPYRA may cause serious side effects, including:
- serious allergic reactions. Stop taking AMPYRA and call your doctor right away or get emergency medical help if you have:
  - shortness of breath or trouble breathing
  - swelling of your throat or tongue
  - hives
- kidney or bladder infections

See "What is the most important information I should know about AMPYRA?"

The most common side effects of AMPYRA include:
- urinary tract infection
- trouble sleeping (insomnia)
- dizziness
- headache
- nausea
- weakness
- back pain
- problems with balance
- multiple sclerosis relapse
- burning, tingling or itching of your skin
- irritation in your nose and throat
- constipation
- indigestion
- pain in your throat

Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of AMPYRA. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store AMPYRA?
- Store AMPYRA at 59°F to 86°F (15°C to 30°C).
- Safely throw away AMPYRA that is out of date or no longer needed.

Keep AMPYRA and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General Information about the safe and effective use of AMPYRA
Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Medication Guide. Do not use AMPYRA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give AMPYRA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them.

This Medication Guide summarizes the most important information about AMPYRA. If you would like more information, talk with your doctor. You can ask your pharmacist or doctor for information about AMPYRA that is written for health professionals.

For more information, go to www.AMPYRA.com or call 1-800-367-5109.

What are the ingredients in AMPYRA?
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would I still be a man?

Ok, I have some friends that ride scooters. I admit it. I had ridden a scooter once, and it was, well, it was FUN! But riding a scooter for 1,000 miles in less than 24 hours was just plain DUMB.

I then saw the second part of the scooter challenge and soon realized it was just the opportunity I needed to make a complete fool of myself while raising money for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. As I developed the plan, it may have gotten a tad out of hand, but extreme rides do call for extreme measures. Apparently not only will I ride for food; *I will ride for a reason*. We need to find a cure for multiple sclerosis now!

Insanity GOLD it was called. Not only ride 1,000 miles in under 24 hours on a scooter, but you had to use a scooter with a 250cc motor. A 250cc scooter by the way, is like a bicycle with a 9-volt battery strapped under the seat. These things have 2 gallon gas tanks and 12 inch wheels! Attempting to ride 1,000 miles in under 24 hours on one of these toys from Power Wheels is, well, just plain DUMBER.

Was it worth risking life and limb, not to mention being seen on a scooter—to get a handshake and a paper certificate after eating a meal of ground up umbrella handles stuffed into goat intestines wrapped in layers of maple flavored congestive heart failure? Why YES, I think it was!

I sent out an email blast to my supporters, asking for donations to the MS Society. The more I raised, the smaller scooter I would ride, and if I raised $2,000 in a week, I would not only ride a little scooter, I would do so dressed as Lloyd from the movie *DUMB and DUMBER*, *in a powder blue tuxedo!*

Needless to say, my so called friends ponied up and I had to get fitted for a tux. I got hold of a Piaggio BV250 scooter from National Powersports Distributors and with the help from Twisted Throttle started the process called *farkling* (Adding all types of accessories for safety and comfort).

I had my GPS and cellphone wired into my helmet, auxiliary driving lights and a bigger windshield. My SPOT tracker and GoPro camera were mounted so my supporters could get a live feed during the ride. I figured the 2.6 gallon tank would give plenty of chances to view my powder blue butt getting kicked at inner city gas stations as I waddled across half the United States. Donations are still accepted by the way...

Food, water, tools and spare parts; an extra pair of underwear and a mix of Preparation H and Shoe-goo tubes filled all the other nooks and crannies of the bike. No room for my MS symptoms, I left them at home. I got a witness from the Greater New England Chapter of the National MS Society, and then I rode to Chicago in under 24-hours dressed in a powder blue tuxedo all to raise awareness for MS! Donations for my ride can be made to the National MS Society.

With my famous Clamsicles (clam chowder popsicles) coming in a close second, my wife claims this ride idea was absolutely my DUMBEST! ■ ABILITY

longhaulpaul.com
main.nationalmssociety.org/goto/Scooter1000
ironbutt.com/meatlovers1000
ironbutt.com/scooter1000

KEEP Giving Back

If my undergraduate studies taught me anything, it was the importance of community service. "Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve" was the school motto drilled into my head from freshman orientation until the day I received my college diploma.

Back then, community service came naturally for most of us. We weren't groomed to simply punch up our resumes and jockey for jobs, we were encouraged to be useful. We recognized that the interdependent nature of a fully inclusive, fully functioning society relied on all of us, and giving back was our duty.

With the convenience of college life, community service opportunities were plentiful. We could attend an activity fair at the beginning of the school year, visit countless service organizations' information booths and sign up to lend a helping hand.

However, like a host of other realities that hit us once we stepped away from the cozy comfort of our alma mater, the real world operated quite differently. In the years following graduation, the rigors of getting our careers off the ground made community service just another item on a never-ending to-do list.

In all honesty, with the exception of serving on boards, councils or planning teams, I lost sight of what real hands-on community service looked like. Then, one day I opened the mail to learn that I had been summoned to jury duty. During the orientation process, the jury coordinator suggested that once we fulfilled this social obligation, we would leave feeling we had given back to the community in the truest sense.

Over the two weeks that the trial lasted, I upheld my responsibility to see that justice was done. And the jury coordinator was right. Our judicial process works for the people, but only when the people work for it. Everyday life is no different.

Granted, people with disabilities are familiar with the additional hurdles that may come with finding a good fit for community service opportunities, but thankfully some of the preparatory work is only a few clicks away on our computer keyboards. (If you don't have a personal computer, one is generally available for your use at your neighborhood library.)

Individuals who are interested in service can find opportunities through the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), which provides resources on a state-by-state basis. Those with disabilities can pursue a successful community service experience through the National Service to Employment Project (NextSTEP).

NextSTEP is intended to eventually lead from experience to employment, and is headed up by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts in Boston; it's funded by the CNCS. The project conducts research, provides technical assistance and creates demonstration projects focusing on people with disabilities in volunteer and community service roles.

NextSTEP promotes service as a way to contribute to the community, gain valuable skills, explore career possibilities and develop social networks along the road to meaningful employment, while providing an accessible opportunity for people with disabilities to volunteer through such programs as AmeriCorps.

"For some individuals with disabilities, the power of a service experience is the opportunity to give back to the community and be viewed for the contribution one can make to others," said Sheila Fesko, project director of NextSTEP. "That transformative experience has contributed to individuals' personal and professional development, as well as their growth as community members."

Between high school graduation and college, Alex Freeman, a NextSTEP participant, served in an organization called City Year in Boston, where he tutored students, co-taught a class, and planned a daylong disability awareness workshop for students. "I honestly think that without that year, I would not be as prepared for college as I am today," Freeman observed.

His contribution is felt far beyond the local community where he served; in fact, the ripple effects touch us all.

"National service participants develop an enormous sense of self-worth from contributing to the well-being of others," said Jewel Bazilio-Bellegarde, former senior training officer of Disability Inclusion for the CNCS. "Community service participants problem-solve; they contribute to society and make a difference."

The significance of that concept is clearer now than ever. That is what our college administrators tried to teach us when they chanted: "Enter to Learn, Leave to Serve." In one way or another, we all gain from our communities. We must remember that giving back is equally important, even though opportunities to serve may not always come knocking at our door. ■ ABILITY

by Betsy Barkley Valnes

serviceandinclusion.org/nextstep
cncs.gov or nationalservice.gov
communityinclusion.org

Betsy Barkley Valnes is a disability rights activist in the US and abroad.

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ACCESSIBLE JAPAN

An Aging Population Drives Change

Japan has the longest overall life expectancy of any country in the world, and nearly a quarter of its residents are 65 and over. This rising Silver Tide has moved the country's leaders to explore how to accommodate its aging population. At the same time, Japan is exploring how to create "barrier-free" environments that also benefit those with disabilities. Satoshi Kose is one of the architects of a more accessible Japan. The professor, who teaches in the graduate school of design at Shizuoka University of Art and Culture, recently spoke with Chet Cooper when *ABILITY Magazine* visited him in Japan.

Chet Cooper: I noticed that Japan ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Satoshi Kose: Yes. It took so long because the Japanese bureaucrats are very, very conservative, and wanted to be sure that when they ratified it, almost everything was in place. In many countries, they ratify the Convention and then start to do the work. At one time, the Japanese government was ready to ratify the Convention, but people with disabilities said "no." Perhaps they didn't think we were ready.

Although we've had special education for many years, Japan is very, very behind when it comes to inclusive education. Now, one of the main issues we're dealing with is to have special schools and inclusive education, to bring children with disabilities into a typical school setting. In order to do that, we need more teaching staff, which is very difficult to achieve because of financial constraints. So even though the Ministry of Education wants to go in that direction, the Ministry of Finance doesn't want to spend more money. (*laughs*) So it's going to take more time.

Cooper: And the education piece is partly why the Convention took so long to be ratified?

Kose: Yes. The education system was not ready to accept the concept—

Cooper: —of inclusion.

Kose: Right, which is what the Convention assumed.

Cooper: How many years do you think the government will take to become in compliance?

Kose: Japan has passed a law to stop discrimination against people with disabilities; it has two years to implement the law. So in two years' time, the government wants to persuade people, organizations, maybe even small businesses, to be ready to comply. We have already seen many small restaurants work to become more accessible. This is particularly difficult in places located on hillsides. But the idea of the new law is to try to make every place more accessible and usable, and the government is now trying to write guidelines regarding how to deal with this physically, conceptually, technologically, etc.

And as to the built environment, in 1994 what is now the Ministry of Construction introduced a law to promote more accessible and usable buildings. But back then the requirement was not mandatory; it was just a recommendation. In 2000, when the accessible built environment

building law was in place, the government introduced the accessible transportation law. The thinking was that if the government gives a license to a transport company, then it should accommodate, as much as possible, those using their mode of transportation. But the requirement was just for new construction and new facilities.

Cooper: Wait, construction or transportation?

Kose: The law covers new construction/facilities for the public transport of 5,000 passengers or more per day. As for existing facilities, there were no mandatory requirements, but the law did state a desire for facilities and conveyances to be converted and/or modified so they're more accessible. Modifications were done in bigger stations. For example, in 2002, when we had the first Universal Design Conference in Yokohama, someone from the United States, who had a disability, came to Narita Airport and took the train to Yokohama. Along the way, he had to ask for assistance from people on the train staff. At a lecture, he said that when he came the next time, he wanted to go from the Narita International Airport to Yokohama without assistance. It took a while, though. After two years, the stations and systems still hadn't been modified. But now, it's quite easy to travel from that airport to Yokohama without any personal assistance. Most stations now have escalators, elevators, and a more accessible route. And you and your companion took the Shinkansen from Osaka to Tokyo and used the elevators, didn't you, Chet? Before the introduction of this accessible transportation law, the Shinkansen station elevators were only for management. *(laughs)*

Cooper: That wasn't very inclusive.

Kose: I remember accompanying a person who used a wheelchair in a Tokyo station. We used a special route and then took the staff elevator up to the platform in Shinkansen. When we arrived at Kyoto station, we went along another special route, to take another express train to a local station. There, the wheelchair had to be carried down to the platform by the staff because it was not level with the train. That was the situation before the accessible transportation law and before the modifications. Now you can find elevators at every Shinkansen station and at other local stations and metros, so things have changed.

After the introduction of the accessible transportation law in 2000, came the revision of the accessible building law in 2002. With the revision, some requirements became mandatory. For instance, in order to get a permit, builders have to check the newer requirements, including those having to do with accessibility. If they're not prepared to comply, then the building permit won't be issued. And also with this revision, local governments have the authority to adapt the requirements to their locality.

Cooper: Is that good or bad?

Kose: Good, because the Japanese are making regulations countrywide, so this must be applicable everywhere in Japan, including the remote areas. If the requirements are too high, the building owners may just give up and not create new construction. But in very busy places, such as Tokyo and Yokohama, businesses will build and compete with one another, and in these more competitive places, we can raise the level of the requirements.

Cooper: So even in the smaller areas, these minimum requirements are mandatory?

Kose: Yes, but because of feasibility the requirement is limited to buildings with a floor area of 2,000 square meters (21,528 feet) or more. So smaller buildings are excluded. But as I was saying, the local government is given much more authority to introduce ordinances, and ask builders to comply with stricter requirements for bigger localities such as Tokyo. In 2006, the accessible transportation and accessible building laws were merged becoming, in a sense, the accessible built environment law, because they covered similar territory and dealt with similar concerns.

Cooper: Do other laws govern software and IT?

Kose: With software, there are very few mandated requirements.

Cooper: That includes access to the web and the accessibility of websites themselves?

Kose: Web accessibility is pretty standard. I know in some countries software services are regulated. But in Japan, it's very, very difficult to regulate them. But we have information technology specialists who've been successful in implementing the American standard for accessibility, which has also become the Japanese standard. So if you're building a website, at least you can ask about how to comply with the standard, but it's not mandatory. The same with the design of products. That's difficult to regulate. It's left up to that particular industry to decide, and many are having a hard time nowadays figuring out how to make things more accessible and usable.

Cooper: What about employment? Does Japanese legislation have any quotas for companies to hire people with disabilities?

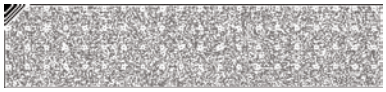
Kose: Yes. In the past, the quota was 1.8 percent.

Cooper: You could hire .8 percent of a person?

(*laughter*)

Kose: I think they've now raised it to 2 percent. But some cannot comply with the requirement, and so they're paying penalties.

Cooper: Sometimes it's not so much that they "can't"









comply, as much as they decide not to, figuring that it's easier to pay the penalty. That happens around the world.

Kose: The problem is that it's sometimes difficult to find a good job that's suitable for people with disabilities, and in other cases it's rather difficult to find someone qualified to do the job. Many organizations have had difficulty in meeting the target. My university was no exception, but it finally succeeded in employing people with disabilities last year.

Cooper: Is there a résumé bank where people with disabilities, who have been so identified, can submit their résumés and companies can search through them? Is that how they find each other?

Kose: I think it depends.

Cooper: Does either the government or a private company have any resources for people with disabilities to post their résumés, so companies can come in and search them and decide to whom they want to offer a job?

Kose: I don't think so. The company or government just says that it wants someone to be employed within the framework of the person with disabilities, but there's no central database system being used.

Cooper: Out of that 2 percent, are employers identifying the type of disabilities they intend to hire?

Kose: It's more left to companies to decide.

Cooper: Do you have an accepted definition of a disability? In the US, we passed the Americans with Disability Act in 1990, followed by the ADA Amendment Act in 2008. Do you have something comparable in Japan?

Kose: In Japan, people with disabilities are certified by the government.

Cooper: That's interesting.

Kose: They are called to be counted, registered as people with disabilities, and then certified.

Cooper: So they have to self-identify with the government and go through a process?

Kose: Yes. It falls under the Ministry of Health and Welfare Department. But the definition of disability is very strict, so the ratio of people with disabilities officially registered are smaller in ratio compared to other countries. In 2012, for example, Japanese official statistics listed people with physical disabilities at 2.9 percent, developmental disabilities at .4 percent, and mental disabilities at 2.5 percent.

Cooper: Let's say you have a student with a disability; is he or she being identified early on in the school system?

Kose: Children are basically under the control of Ministry of Education, however the certification for a child with a disabilitiy is similar. The definition is strict, and the child is directed to go to a special school for people with visual impairment, hearing impairment or physical impairment. As I mentioned, inclusive education is growing slowly. And we are now experiencing more and more children being diagnosed with ADHD and other learning challenges. It can be difficult to classify and certify that children have a disability.

Cooper: Let's say you identify a child with ADHD and dyslexia. You're saying that even though they have been identified in the school system as a child with a disability,

they might not be qualified to be a person assisted through the health ministry?

Kose: I think compared to other physical disabilities, learning disabilities are considered to be less significant.

Cooper: Tell me how you're involved with the Zero Project?

Kose: I managed to propose design guidelines for [zero barrier] dwellings for an aging society through a research and development project. I then proposed to link its adoption with housing mortgage interest rates. Here, we've long had the Japan Housing Loan Corporation (JHLC), which is a semi-government financing organization to assist people with buying homes. My proposal was that only those designs with higher standards, i.e. housing-policy linked projects, would be eligible for the lower interest rates made possible by government subsidies.

It was expected to incentivize builders to make dwellings more accessible and usable for those in their older years, and just by making people aware of this option, we could nudge them to prepare for a better future. The program lasted for about 10 years with some success, but its role has been diminished. The plan was to create durable, energy-conserving design for the aging, who would get a lower interest rate. But private sector banks wanted to get back into the housing mortgage business, and insisted that JHLC be abolished because it was no longer needed. As the economy started to come back, the private sector had more than enough money to lend and rediscovered that mortgages make for a better business proposition than a speculative building investment. Now the JHLC must compete against private banks, which is difficult because interest rates are historically low.

Cooper: That's really too bad. Let's go back to the Zero Project for a moment. I noticed that you've frequently been invited to speak about it. Tell me more about that.

Kose: My intention for the design guideline proposal was to raise people's expectations for the quality of what they could expect, which could be done with just a slight difference in the interest rate. The government wants a higher level than the minimum requirements by the building standard law, which doesn't take into consideration seniors or people with disabilities. My idea was that if all dwellings were prepared for everyone to age-in-place, then that could be a platform for people with disabilities to modify, according to their individual needs. Unfortunately, when a law regarding senior housings was enacted in 2001, the design guidelines were geared more narrowly towards seniors but not for everyone who needs to age-in-place.

Cooper: I guess maybe I'm missing something. The difference in the financing would be that monies would be set to modify homes for—

Kose: It wouldn't modify them; the money would only go towards new construction, which is much easier.

Cooper: Meaning to make sure the homes were built using universal design?

Kose: Yes.

Cooper: In my hotel room, you have to take a big step into a pre-fabricated bathroom.

Kose: That's too bad. With the guest rooms in hotels, it is possible to make them without a step. In Hamamatsu, where my university is, I stayed in a hotel for 11 years that had no step difference between rooms. The problem is that it's a very small size room unit with a closet and a bathtub and is not wheelchair accessible.

Cooper: The size was not the issue. But for people without any mobility, it's going to be hard for a caregiver to get in there.

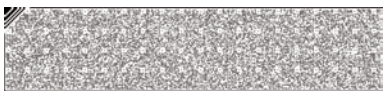
Kose: That's true. Stepping up to the bathroom area is difficult. To make it flat, you have to have some depth under the bathroom area for the plumbing. Some hotels have a step there because that's much easier and cheaper to build, even though it's not user-friendly or accessible.

If you look through my papers on design for aging, you'll notice that we've tried to keep it flat between the dressing area and the wet area next to the bathtub. The bathtub edge is about 16-inches high, but the dressing and wet areas are basically flat. We've proposed this be done in every bathroom. And when the Great Hanshin Earthquake occurred in 1995, many dwellings fell, and the emergency shelter and housing were not accessible, which caused people to suffered.

Cooper: How did the earthquake impact design?

Kose: After that, public rentals were built to be more accessible. The public housing was basically built flat, including the bathroom area. Down the road, residents, particularly seniors, and those who will soon become seniors, are expected to choose to stay in local government rental housing and are unlikely to build or purchase new dwellings. That design style is mirrored in private sector condominiums, because people who purchase a condo unit are spending quite a bit of money, so it's out of the question that the dwellings they buy will have the step level difference in the bathroom. So we have learned a lot in 20 years since the earthquake, and now we are trying to make things better. Very slowly we're improving. ■ ABILITY

www8.cao.go.jp/shougai/english/annualreport/2012/index-pdf.html



Shayne's World



As a baby, Shayne Smith contracted a potentially deadly condition, and underwent multiple amputations. But to whom much was taken away, much was also given. Today, Smith, 25, is powered by his high-octane confidence. Over the years, he's made history as an athlete, crossed paths with tons of A-list celebrities, and now focuses on motivating young people to breathe fire into their dreams. Recently, he spoke with our Lia Martirosyan.

Lia Martirosyan: Tell me more about the journey that got you to where you are today.

Smith: When I was four months old, I contracted a rare form of meningitis called meningococcal septicemia, which attacked my bloodstream, so all the blood in my body stopped. Doctors had to amputate my legs, my left hand, and some fingers on my right hand to get the blood flowing again.

As I grew up, my mom was always very supportive of my independence; she didn't let me feel sorry for myself. And I was not going to let what happened to me stop me from being a kid and going out and achieving things. At 3, my mom got me into swimming. At 6, she got me into horseback riding. At 7, it was sledge hockey.

Martirosyan: Sledge hockey?

Smith: You have to understand: When you're 7 years old and living in Canada, hockey is everything. Back then, my cousin, Mitch, was my best friend, and after he started playing hockey, I couldn't understand why I couldn't do it, too. I was very jealous. So then I found out about sledge hockey, where you sit on a toboggan-type sled, and you have two sticks. On one end is a hockey blade, and on the other is a figure-skating pick. So you dig into the ice, and that's how you skate. To make it work, we used a little plastic cup that slipped onto my arm, we cut a stick in half, and coming out of the tip was the hockey blade, and coming out of the elbow was the figure skating pick, so that I could skate. In my second year, Mitch and I got to play together. Moments like that made me realize that different doesn't mean inferior. Everyone is equal.

Martirosyan: But you didn't stop at hockey…

Smith: Right. When I turned 8, I found wheelchair basketball, which opened doors for me. It took me four years to score my first basket, but by 15 I was playing on the Canadian Junior Team. I was there until I was about 23, and then I started doing little motivational speeches here and there on behalf of the team. Finally, about two years ago, I decided, "You know what? I want to do motivational speaking for a living."

Martirosyan: I'm sure your story motivates people.

Smith: People always tell me, "Oh, my gosh, Shayne, you're so strong! You're so amazing! You have such a big heart." And my answer always is: "I got it from my mom."

Martirosyan: Excellent.

Smith: She not only raised me, but she did it on her own. My dad split. So she was Mom, Dad, taxi driver, basketball coach, hockey coach... She was everything. To this day, if anyone asks me who my best friend is, it's my mom. I know it sounds cheesy, but we're best friends.

Martirosyan: That's beautiful. Tell me more about your motivational speaking? Did someone approach you about getting into it?

Smith: I gave my first presentation during a luncheon where Wayne Gretzky's dad had won Father of the Year. There were about 900 people there, and little 8-year-old Shayne got up and started speaking. It was on behalf of Variety Village in Toronto, the gym where I played basketball. It's a sports and training facility for people with all kinds of challenges, and people without any. Meaning that it was basically a training facility for everybody. I happened to be there to promote it. So after I spoke, everyone came up to me and said: "You're really good at this; you should do it for a living." So I gave another speech and another one, and now at 25 I run a speaking company.

Martirosyan: What does running a speakers' bureau entail?

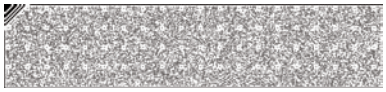
Smith: I'm the boss. I'm the president. It's called Nolimitz, spelled with a z, because I want it to be hip and cool. I just go out and do motivational speaking, and it's awesome. Financially my company's very new, and we're not there yet, but I have a great sponsor in Tutor Doctor. They send me to all their franchisees to spread my message to kids. Without their help I would never be able to do what I do.

Kids always say, "I'm not dumb, I don't need a tutor." But I ask them: "Did Michael Jordan have a coach?" And they say, "Yeah." Then I say, "And he was one of the best basketball players in history. A coach and a tutor are basically the same thing." So if I can get kids to look at it like that, they can get the help they need to create a brighter future for themselves.

Martirosyan: Great reference.

Smith: Exactly. Now, I could stand to be brought down a few notches on the humble chain, but I think I'm one of the best speakers in the world, and I have a speaking coach, too.

Martirosyan: When did you start getting coached on how to speak?





Smith: About two years ago. As a matter of fact, I was coached by the people at Tutor Doctor.

Martirosyan: Would you say motivational speaking is your passion?

Smith: Definitely! I see myself doing this for the next 10 or 15 years. And when I'm done speaking, I'll be the first physically challenged coach of an NBA team. That's gonna happen.

Martirosyan: How are you working towards that?

Smith: I know the sport very well. I know the plays. I know how to coach people. When the time comes, I'll get there. Right now I'm just focusing on the speaking side, and a little bit on of the hip-hop on the side.

Martirosyan: Tell me about your rapping.

Smith: I started rapping and freestyling at 14 or 15, and then everyone again said, "Oh, you're really good, you should pursue this." My best friend is my producer, as well as my speaking manager. We're really, really tight. We do everything together. He came over one day and he made a beat. He was like, "Spit. Spit on it. Let's go." Next thing you know I wrote something, and now we have two songs up on Sound Cloud. We're working on an entire project, actually. Most hip-hop artists today—, and don't get me wrong, I love Wayne, I love 2 Chainz, I love that stuff—, but what are they really saying? Not much. With me, there's no cussing; my music is all motivational. How many songs like that are there out there? We've got guys like Macklemore, who I think is incredible. He's got that "Same Love" song, which is great and empowers people. A couple of weeks ago, I got to hang out with him in Philadelphia. I want to do stuff like he does, letting people know that just because you're different doesn't mean you're not as good.

Martirosyan: Macklemore, nice experience. Tell us something else that you want people to know about you.

Smith: The biggest thing that people need to know in this world is that there's no limit. We always hear people say: "The sky's the limit." I think that's a load of BS. We have footprints on the moon; we have Felix Baumgartner skydiving from space. So don't tell me the sky's the limit. The sky was the limit back when we didn't think going above the sky was really possible. Now there is *no* limit.

Speaking of which…let's talk about my basketball career. I played for about 17 years for on the Junior National Team in Canada. I feel proud of the fact that I'm the only player in history to do that with half a hand. I'm the only Jewish Canadian wheelchair basketball player in the world right now. When I was approached by the Maccabi USA team to go to Israel and play there, it was a great opportunity and a great experience. I had already retired, and hadn't played in about a year and a half, but then when I thought about it, I figured, as a Jewish athlete, what better way was there

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to formally retire than a tournament in Israel? It was a great experience. I met great friends. I connected with a US soldier who was one of the most awesome dudes I've ever met. He really went out of his way for me after the US hockey team went up the mountain for a tour of Masada. We could have taken a cable car back down, which would've been easier, but the group chose to walk down the mountain, and Jason wanted me to get the same experience as everybody else, so he threw me on his back and carried me down. It was a great experience.

Martirosyan: That's incredible.

Smith: And a great way to finish out my basketball career.

Martirosyan: I'd like to hear more about how you got to meet Nelson Mandela.

Smith: I was 12 years old when I found out that Nelson Mandela was coming to give a presentation in Toronto at the SkyDome (now Rogers Centre), I handed in a résumé to be given a chance to hear him speak. Of the 60,000 kids who handed in résumés, I was chosen to have lunch with him. I'll never forget that experience; it was one of the best days in my life. I'm not a shy dude. So I said, "Mr. Mandela, sir, it's an honor for me to meet you." And he looked down, put his hand on my shoulder, and replied: "No, my child, it's an honor that I got to share a meal with you." To me, that was priceless. He was my role model and my mom's hero, too. When trying to empower other people, who better to have as a role model than Nelson Mandela? No words can describe him. Also, before she passed on, I got to meet Princess Diana. I was only three at the time, and it's my first memory ever.

Martirosyan: Lovely for you.

Smith: We were all lined up against the wall, and she walked into the room and shook hands with us. She started at one end of the room and made her way down. I was in the middle. She walked right up to me, talked to me for a little bit and then, after she shook some more hands, came back to me and talked a little bit more before she left.

Martirosyan: And you remember that?

Smith: I do. I don't remember what she said, but I have a vivid memory of her walking into the room, this beautiful princess, and walking right up to me.

Martirosyan: How did you happen to get in that line?

Smith: She came to the place where my prosthetic limbs were made.

Martirosyan: So again, your mama made things happen for you?

Smith: Exactly. It was all because of my mama that I got to do that. I also met the Queen of England and presented her with a commemorative doll for Variety Village, the training facility where I played basketball. Then, when the rapper Drake was on the TV show, *Degrassi High*, I taught him wheelchair basketball.

Martirosyan: Look at you.

Smith: Yeah. So when his character on the show was shot and started to use a wheelchair, Drake had to learn to play wheelchair basketball. I coached him on how to do it. That's why he was so good.

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(laughter)

Martirosyan: How did the Drake connection come about?

Smith: He came to Variety Village to learn how to play basketball in the chair, and I just happened to be there. I was at the right place at the right time.

Martirosyan: You've built some different experiences for yourself.

Smith: It's about creating your own experiences.

Martirosyan: Let us hear some of your rapping.

Smith: Okay. When my producer and I rap together, we always try to work something in from comic books or a TV show. The first song we did together was "Mad Hatter." The second one was "Riddle Me This," like the Riddler. These are a few lines from "Bebop and Rocksteady"—from the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles back in the '80s. This is the world premiere; no one's heard this yet.

Martirosyan: Do it.

Smith: *Sittin' in rush hour*
On my way to get some moo shu
When God gives me lemons
I be prayin' that they lulu
Haters want me out the game
They claimin' that I'm too Jew
Look 'em in the eyes like,
Dude, you got a screw loose.
All you do is chirp
I've got your birdies goin' cuckoo

Then the last few lines are:

You just sufferin'
With a bit of succotashin'
Now it's vacation time
I'm gonna hit up spring break
I hear that's the best place
To go and find a little Fake.

Martirosyan: I hear it.

Smith: Thank you. A lot of people don't know this about me, but my celebrity crush is Selena Gomez. In the movie *Spring Breakers*, her character's name is Fake. "I'm gonna hit up spring break, to try to find a little Fake." So that's where that line came from.

Martirosyan: Hopefully you get to meet her.

Smith: Meet her? She's my future wife. So anyway, when I do my motivational speaking my favorite exercise is to bring up two kids and two teachers. I get them to tell me something that they love to do… Let me give you an example. Give me anything that you love to do, Lia.

Martirosyan: I like to sing.

Smith: Are you the best at it?

Martirosyan: I am.

Smith: Louder.

Martirosyan: I AM!

(Laughter)

Smith: Imagine two kids and two teachers doing that at a presentation in front of 1,000 kids. And that whole energy of the room just explodes. And then I quickly tell them, "Now imagine if we were all to decide that we were the best at something on a daily basis. How powerful and incredible we would be." And then I don't exclude myself from it. I put myself into that situation, and I'll tell them what I think I'm the best at. I tell them. "Best one-handed wheelchair basketball player in the world. I'm also the best white disabled Jewish rapper in the world. I tell them that, too."

Martirosyan: That's pretty detailed.

Smith: I go even farther than that, and this is where I really like to connect with them. I tell them that the only reason why Channing Tatum won "Sexiest Man in the World" is because the people who write the articles haven't met me yet. When you truly love who you are, it's very easy for other people to love you, too. If you ask 100 people what's the sexiest quality in another person, 99 of them will say that it's confidence.

Martirosyan: When people approach you with questions, how do you handle it?

Smith: Any question you can think of, I've been asked—appropriately and inappropriately. If you're gonna ask me inappropriately in front of your entire school, I'm going to make you look like a fool. And if you ask me appropriately, I'll answer.

For instance, when I speak at high schools, sex is a very big topic. I have a lot of kids ask me if I can be active. When they ask it like that I'll say, "When it comes time for me to have a family, it's possible." I had one kid in British Columbia who, in front of his entire school of 2,000 kids, including his girlfriend, said: "Yo, bro, can you get laid?" And I said, "Ask your girlfriend."

(laughter)

Martirosyan: Sassy.

Smith: I'm very sarcastic and kids are very sarcastic, so I think that's why we connect so well. I'm here to motivate you, and I'm also here to have a great time. I get to meet all these awesome kids, too, and the kid who heckled me that day and I are friends now. He e-mails me.

It's all about reaching people. To do that, I try to start my presentations out just right. I wheel onto the stage, maybe while the kids are filing in, and start shooting a basketball. And when I'm ready, and when the teachers give me the okay, I stop playing basketball and start talking. There's sometimes 1,000 kids. It gets so quiet that you could hear a pin drop. Sometimes I wait a good two minutes. I keep them quiet without even speaking, and then I'll very comically say, "What up?"

(laughter)

Smith: And that's the reaction I get. And then the first thing I ask them is, "How many of you look at a guy like me and think: 'Poor guy, he's got, like, no legs, and half a hand, life's got to be so hard.'" And they all raise their hands. And then I'll say, "How many of you want to ask what happened, but think that would be rude?" All the hands go up again. And then I say, "Who wouldn't be shy? Who would ask?" A kid throws his hand up. I make him stand up, and I say:

"So we've just met. How would you ask me?" And he'll say, "What happened to you?" And I'll say, "Wow, man, that's so rude! We just met! You don't start off with, 'Hello, how are you, what's your name?' Nothing? Dude, you're so rude." And then I get a little giggle, and the kids gets all shaken up and shy, and I'm totally kidding, but I start wheeling myself away, and then I'll come back and say: "I'm totally kidding. Can we give Jeff a round of applause? That was really great!" And then I'll answer the question.



Martirosyan: You're interactive.

Smith: I like it to be fun. So many speakers out there are so stiff. They have all the points they want to hit, and they lecture to the kids. No wonder kids tend to get on their phones or have their headphones in their ears, not paying attention. You've got to keep them engaged. My presentation is very animated, very comical. I really get through to them, and keep it interactive by asking them a lot of questions. Once I had a kid who was listening to his headphones during my presentation, and I took them. *(laughs)* I took his cell phone, too, and I made him sit down in the front for the rest of the presentation. A lot of speakers don't know how to reach the kids; they come in wearing a suit and tie, looking professional. I wear track pants and a t-shirt. I want kids to connect to me, and to feel like I'm a dude just like them. I may be 25, but I'm a kid at heart. ■ ABILITY

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEWS

• *Nearly half of adults with disabilities* who are capable of doing aerobic physical activity don't do any. An additional 22 percent are not active enough. Unfortunately this sedentary population is 50 percent more likely than its active peers to acquire such chronic diseases as cancer, diabetes and heart disease, according to the report, "Inactivity Related to Chronic Disease in Adults with Disabilities," recently issued by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

By contrast, only 5 percent of Special Olympics athletes reported having "no regular exercise program," and 54.7 percent of Special Olympics athletes get physical activity three or more times per week.



• *Recently in Baku, Azerbaijan, Mary Davis*, regional president and managing director of Europe Eurasia, signed a strategic partnership agreement with the International Sports Press Association (AIPS) on behalf of Special Olympics International, making AIPS a Global Impact Partner for Special Olympics.

The partnership will leverage the collective power of sports and media to build awareness and promote inclusion, respect and acceptance of people with disabilities. AIPS will provide media coverage while increasing awareness of the Special Olympics through AIPS' channels, while working in concert with other national member associations that report on Special Olympics' athletes, events and global advocacy initiatives.

The signing occurred during AIPS' 77th Congress, where more than 220 delegates from 110 countries gathered to celebrate the organization's 90th anniversary, and attracted some of the world's most influential journalists who all came together under one roof.

Special Olympics WORLD GAMES LOS ANGELES 2015

• *ESPN has been named the official broadcaster* of the LA 2015 World Games in a global programming deal, where the premier sports network will bring the 2015 Special Olympics World Games to millions of fans around the world next summer.

The agreement provides ESPN with rights to cover the 2015 Special Olympics World Games' opening ceremony from the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum; all of the daily events; the closing ceremony; and other cultural activities.

ESPN will show the opening ceremony live, and feature nightly highlights. Some parts of LA2015 coverage will be available in both English- and Spanish-language. Fans around the world will be able to watch via ESPN networks and media platforms in the US, Mexico, Spanish-speaking Latin America, the Caribbean, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. ■ ABILITY

by Christy White

Christy White is the director of Special Olympics Global Media and Public Relations

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specialolympics.org/Press/2014/International_Sports_Press_Association_becomes_Global_Impact_Partner_for_Special_Olympics.aspx

specialolympics.org/Stories/General/ESPN_Will_Broadcast_the_2015_World_Games_in_LA.aspx?TaxID=1319


A.I.P.S.



Hear Ye, Hear Ye



Meeting with VOICEYE in Seoul, Korea

Similar looking to barcodes used on products at the grocery store, VOICEYE encodes large amounts of data into a small, printed square. Using a free app available on your smartphone, scanned VOICEYE codes can be translated and decoded in a variety of ways: print, voice, braille, or translation.

Recently while visiting Seoul, Korea, *ABILITY*'s Lia Martirosyan spoke with Michael Park, VOICEYE's chief executive and president, who explained how the magic happens.

Lia Martirosyan: Can you give me a brief overview of VOICEYE?

Michael Park: In 2006, VOICEYE started out as code printed into the bottom of civil complaint documents that were issued by the government through the Internet. Since these documents had the potential to be forged, VOICEYE stored the origin data and digital signature of the issuing organization in barcode, so that you would know it wasn't forged.

VOICEYE codes have been printed on various certificates, written judgments, prescriptions and utility bills by entities such as universities, our Ministry of Public Administration and Security, our Supreme Court, and also newspapers, magazines, books and leaflets, which are intended for people with low vision. This gives everyone equal access to the printed material. In the process, VOICEYE developed printed text data that could be stored into a small code and combined with Text to Speech Technology, which can read printed text out loud.

Martirosyan: What's the difference between VOICEYE code and the Quick Reference (QR) code that Japan's Denso Wave created?

Park: Many people think VOICEYE and QR are the same, but they're not. While they're both two-dimensional barcodes, VOICEYE has 10 times the capacity of QR and can contain various types of data. For example, if we generate code with 1,000 bytes of data, QR needs 5 square cm to contain it, while VOICEYE only needs 1.4 square cm due to its high density.

Most QR codes only contain a URL for a web page, but scanned VOICEYE codes show the full data. Also VOICEYE provides various types of data formats, including leaflets, schedulers and business cards, which can be used online or offline.

Martirosyan: I understand, I'm guessing VOICEYE has a patent?

Park: We have a number of them for encoding/decoding two-dimensional barcode, as well as outputting code through voice synthesis. Technology patents have not only been taken out in Korea, but also in the US, the European Union and China.

Martirosyan: What feedback are you getting from the Korean market?

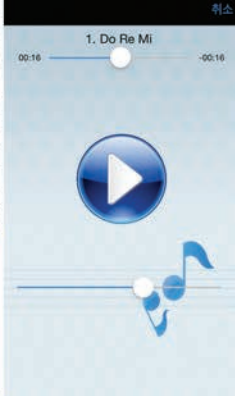
Park: The Korean government has adopted VOICEYE code for those who have low vision, so they have the same access as people without disabilities. It's been stated in our disability discrimination acts, as well as in our disabled person welfare laws, that VOICEYE code should be printed on government documents, certificates and any signs that are distributed to the public. So our code has been widely adopted to enhance accessibility for those who have low vision. Also, many government offices provide a mobile application that can scan VOICEYE code.



L to R: Striking a pose: Sun Kim, Lia Martirosyan and Michael Park







Martirosyan: This is great, when did you start marketing your product internationally?

Park: We've been targeting overseas markets for a few years now. At the moment, we have distributors in the US, UK, Canada, Japan, France, Thailand, China, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Chile. These countries have been promoting our technology for use in government, schools and business. However, unlike in Korea, other countries have no regulations or laws that urge them to use VOICEYE code for information accessibility. So, results may be slow, but we have many inquiries and many projects in the works.

Martirosyan: We've been working closely with Viewplus, your US distributors, to make our printed editorial audible. How do people who are blind know where to find the code on a product?

Park: There's a standardized location of VOICEYE code at the right top corner of a paper, making it easy for those who have low vision to know where to find it. In Korea, most customers print VOICEYE code into this standardized location; we encourage overseas customers to do that as well, so that there's a global standard. Moreover, VOICEYE has been providing stands for smartphones in order to scan codes more easily for those who have low vision. Once you place your smartphone on the stand and align it with the right top corner of a printed piece of material that has our code, you can conveniently scan and decode it.

We're developing a scanning-indicator mobile application that helps move to your smartphone's location. It can detect even a portion of a VOICEYE code, and then reveal the whole code. We're almost finished with it and will upload it to the Mac App Store and the Google Play in the coming months.

Martirosyan: Good to know! Have you done any focus groups with individuals who are blind?

Park: In Korea, we test all VOICEYE products with the Seoul National School for the Blind and the Hanbit School of the Blind before we release the products on the market. We've also gotten feedback and inquiries from people who use VOICEYE decoding devices and smartphone apps through community sites online.

Martirosyan: How do companies embed VOICEYE onto their printed pages?

Park: Generally, VOICEYE provides plug-in software for MS Word, Adobe InDesign and QuarkXPress, which can edit printed materials to generate VOICEYE codes. Customers purchase a license to use VOICEYE Maker and install it. Then the customer can generate VOICEYE codes containing whole text data that can be embedded on each page; code will be printed at the right top corner, which as I mentioned, is starting to become a global standard.

If customers want to generate codes within their system without plug-in software, we provide a type of library to generate and print code automatically. This consists of a library for the server and the client, which can be interlocked with a reporting tool. Generating code can be stored as an image file so customers can add it to existing files.

Martirosyan: Can you embed music into the code?

Park: An MP3 file is so big that it can't be stored into something the size of VOICEYE code, but we can decode a few parts of an MP3 file in a few seconds. This could be used for a simple greeting or brief voice message.

Martirosyan: Can you have a URL link within the code directing to a full piece of music?

Park: Why not? VOICEYE code can contain a URL link address. Once customers scan the code, a linked web page will open and the music will be played online.

Martirosyan: What future developments should we expect?

Park: Recently, we've created many assistive technology products using Optical Character Recognition (OCR). VOICEYE code can compensate when OCR technology is difficult to recognize or might have errors due to a document's format.

As far as I know, our code is the only technology on the market that can read and deliver this level of correct, printed data to customers with smartphones. We also have a business called Phone Marketing to provide new services with VOICEYE for people without disabilities. We're making various types of data, including text, business card, leaflet, audible menu, scheduler and sheet music, which will combine codes with Near field communication (NFC) technology to create a new business model. You constantly have to innovate to meet customer's needs and give them top-of-the-line service.

■ ABILITY

voiceye.com



STEVIE WONDER

For more than five decades, Stevie Wonder has been a powerful musical force. He's won 22 Grammy Awards and sold more than 100 million albums and singles. Wonder, who's been blind almost since birth, is a committed advocate for people with disabilities, a courageous political activist, and a compassionate philanthropist who's hosted the House Full of Toys fundraiser to benefit children for nearly two decades. Recently, *ABILITY*'s Chet Cooper and Lia Martirosyan spent some time with the legendary artist, who was named a United Nation's Messenger of Peace. The three of them sat around his piano chatting where, occasionally, Wonder magically broke into song.

♩[Stevie Wonder singing and playing piano]♪





Chet Cooper: Thank you, what a great way to start an interview. The first time we met was during a fundraising event for Christopher Reeve. Do you remember the event?

Stevie Wonder: I do remember, yes.

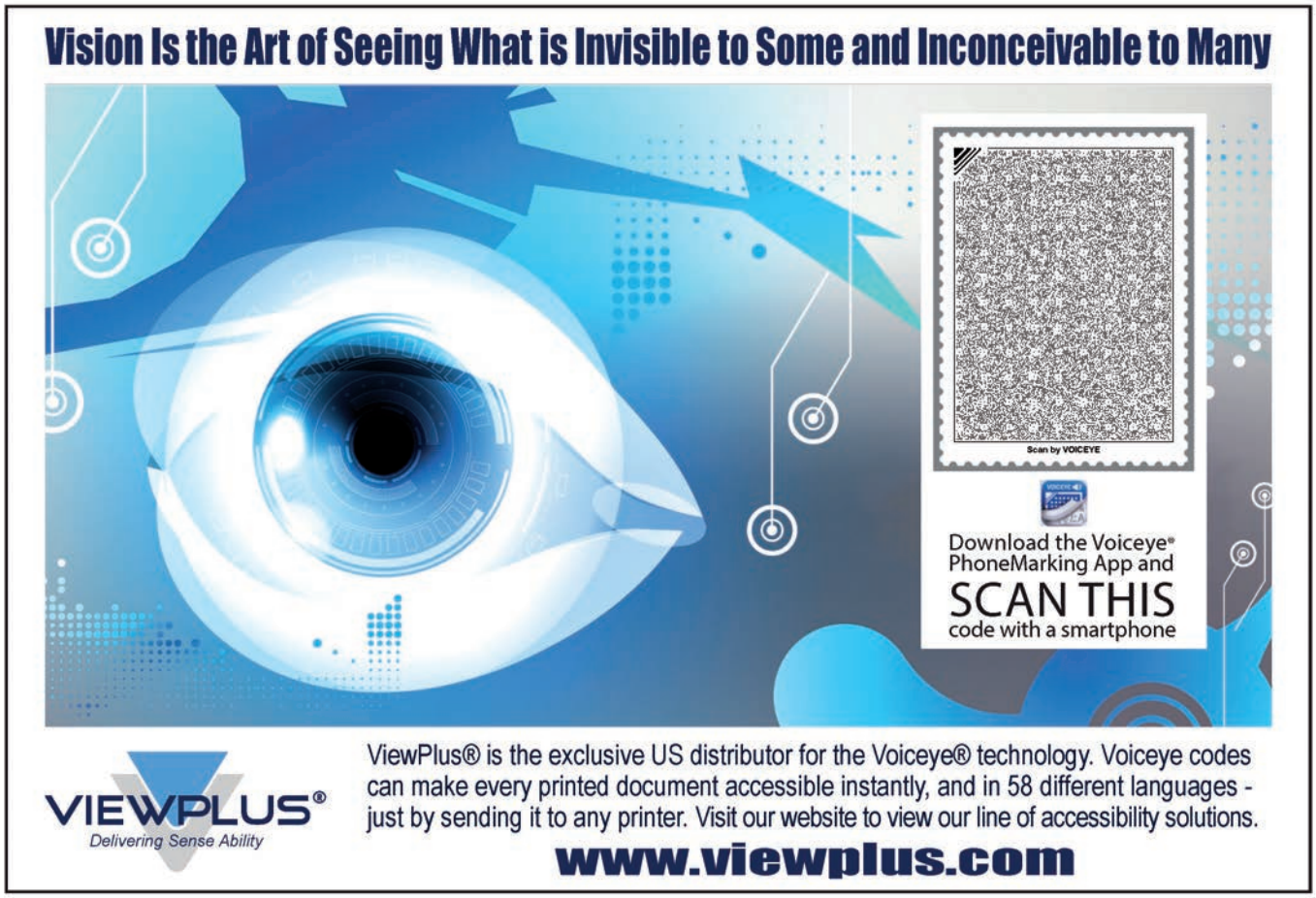
Cooper: How did you get connected with Christopher?

Wonder: We had met some years ago, before he was a quadriplegic. At some point we had met, I think at several award shows or something like that. We said hello. I'd seen a few of his movies. But obviously I felt that he was a good person even then, and obviously the tragedy of what happened, the accident that happened, was heartbreaking. We all felt horrible for him after it. Those of us who I knew who had a disability as well said how courageous he was to continue to be able to fight for and do the best he could do with what he had and supported the various causes for those with disabilities.

Cooper: I remember it was a really interesting evening. As usual, you did a great job. Tell me about how you got involved with the United Nations.

Wonder: Actually, a very good friend of mine, Tim Francis, had been in communication with various people from the United Nations. They had interest in me being a part of the United Nations, a messenger of peace, and I was so elated, I was so excited about it, to want me to specifically be and speak for those with disabilities was an honor for me. Without question, I said yes, yes, and another yes, and yes on top of that yes, which adds up to another yes. The opportunity to be able to serve and to not only have a position about how you want for the world to be more accessible for people with disabilities as well, to be able to have a voice and to speak aloud through being a part of the United Nations as a messenger of peace. And it's been truly an honor.

Lia Martirosyan: Have you been able to travel as an



ambassador of peace yet, other than to the United Nations?

Wonder: I have traveled to the convention they had in Switzerland. The organization is WIPO, World Intellectual Property Organization. The original meeting they had, getting all the various countries to come together, and at least agree to meet and to agree that they'll have a meeting signing for there to be more countries that would agree to making far more books available for people who were blind or with low vision. The issue was, some of the significant countries were having an issue with the various publishers, and their concern was books being duplicated, piracy and all that. But the reality is, with the technology we have today, there are ways around that. So my thing was getting the countries to the table and agreeing that they would meet, and they did do that. And a lot of the countries signed that they would work out the legislation that would make more printed information accessible and available.

[Stevie challenged the organization in 2013, to conclude the accord, promising the international negotiators a performance if it's concluded. Stevie's quote: "While the signing of this treaty is a historic and important step, I am respectfully and urgently asking all governments and states to prioritize ratification of this treaty so that it will become the law of the land in your respective countries and states. It is humbling to know that when the weakest among us is in need, you answered the call with a steely determination and a steadfast courage to make a difference. Today we all are brothers and sisters in the struggle to make this life and the future better, not for one, but for all."]

Cooper: On the world peace portion of your—I guess I'll say duties, have you been able to travel to some of the regions of the world that are having peace issues?

Wonder: Not as much as I would like to. I think that to me, the issues that we have dealing with world peace, we just need to deal with one very simple thing, and it would go away. And that is, man has to get rid of his ego. Because that's what is the destruction, that is the destruction that would get an extremist group in Nigeria to kidnap 300 young students, females, because their position is that they feel women should not be in the Western world or literate at all. That goes to show you how people and egos get involved that have nothing to do with the God they serve. Because I'm believing that nowhere in the Qur'an or in the Bible or any other book, for that matter, that it is for the woman or for anyone to be illiterate.

Cooper: With the ego removed—

Wonder: —there's no way we can find peace with the ego. There's no way. It is completely the opposite of



everything that spirituality, Allah, God, stands for. And until we get rid of that, we'll only move but so far. And that's everywhere in the world.

Cooper: I think there's a song here about ego. We'll start working on it.

Wonder: *(laughs)* Exactly.

Cooper: Lia and I just traveled to two different locations in the world in this last few months, both of them conflict areas. Recently, we were in Korea.

Wonder: North or South?

Cooper: We were in South. Some people we spoke with are talking about trying to have dialogue with the North, at the grassroots level, but they're having issues with the political nature of it.

Wonder: Yeah, even though the intention is not for it to be so, a lot of times when you have organizations that do need governments to be involved, it becomes political. Not because of the essence of what the organization's trying to do—it's almost like different awards shows or awards that are given away. When you involve, say, record people in it, then those record people of the various companies are going to say, "Hey, you got a vote, so make sure you vote for people just from our company, vote for artists that are on our label. Vote for this. Vote for that."

So even though the original purpose is to get the objective opinions and feedback to really determine what's great, you don't. For example, for me, with the Grammies last time, I was very, very disappointed to know that John Legend's album was not nominated. It was a great album. You can tell it by the way they're playing the single now, and the single's old, meaning it's been out for a long time, and people like the song. But it's my opinion that a lot of that has to do with politics. So I think that even though we're talking about two different things, unfortunately, the idea of people saying to you, "We've got to start at the grassroots level," I understand that. I really do, and I wish that it didn't have to be like that, to get through.

But unfortunately, again, ego brings about fear, and it brings about distrust. And there you go. It's such a horrible thing, because life has gone on for a long time, and time has gone on even longer than life, human life as we know it. I always say, time is long, but life is shorter. We think of the many things we need to fix, like making the world more accessible to people with various disabilities, making medicines or treatments more available to all the world not just for those who can afford it. We go on and on and on. I'm just looking forward to the time where the world is accessible, because that's the right thing to do, be accessible to everyone.





Stevie struming a beat on his harpejji



Stevie performing at the Global Citizen Festival together with 60,000 activists in Central Park, they lifted their voices to end extreme poverty.

Cooper: One of the things that ABILITY Magazine *has afforded us is that we're traveling and doing stories, whether it's accessibility or integration of people with disabilities into existing organizations, it's continually opening doors. Whether it's interviews in Korea, Japan, China, or a meeting with an Israeli, a Palestinian, and a Jordanian who are looking to create world peace in that region. Have you heard of the city of Petra?*

Wonder: Not immediately.

Cooper: It's an ancient city in Jordan built inside a mountain range, taking a horse and carriage to get there. It's incredible. The reason they invited us to go see that was, they've now made a carriage that's accessible for someone with a power wheelchair to roll up into the back of. Bringing accessibility into this old city has them thinking of using this venue to talk about world peace.

Wonder: That's great.

Martirosyan: They're thinking about a world peace festival of music and art in 2015. Obama was there last year for the first time.

Wonder: That'll be great. I really commemorate Obama for the many things he is doing and attempting to do in breaking some of the bridges down that have existed for years and years. I just feel that when people like yourself go and visit these places, it's the contribution of being present to see change for good to happen. It makes my heart smile.

Cooper: We hope to continue to do that. We'll continue to have dialogue with you, and you can participate at some level if you'd like. What kinds of technology do you like using?

Wonder: I like the iPhone, the iPad, all the various members of that family. But I like all the various technologies that are becoming available to make the world more accessible to people who are blind and with low vision. I also like that more and more people are committing themselves to close captioning so the deaf can really know what's going on. I like the position of making buildings more accessible by having ramps and various ways people who are paraplegic to be able to get

around. As much as there is voice output in a lot of the technology, I like the fact that they're making apps that also allow you to read Braille.

Cooper: I've seen you at the CSUN Conference [California State University, Northridge Center on Disabilities' 29th Annual International Technology and Persons with Disabilities Conference] over the years. You were just there in San Diego. Do you see new technologies emerging every year?

Wonder: This was my first time going to the CSUN in San Diego. I would go to the one in LA before. I went one other time to CSUN in San Diego, but it was over when I got there *(laughs)*. I was on the road, and I was trying to make it, but I just didn't make it. But I enjoyed going to this last convention. It was great.

Cooper: Anything new that you were surprised that exists now, something that took you away, where you said, "Wow, I didn't expect this to be—?"

Wonder: I like the glasses that Google is working on and wanting to have the glasses be able to read print information and that information be then converted to speech. I like that. And I like the fact that people are using the various maps to then be able to let people know where they are who are blind by wearing those glasses. And there's another one that has a camera inside the glasses, and you can actually say if you have someone who's stationary somewhere else, they can look at you on the camera and see where you are and direct you to where to go.

Cooper: I haven't seen that one yet.

Wonder: That's great stuff.

Cooper: Have you heard of OrCam?

Wonder: From Israel. Yeah, I saw OrCam, and I liked that too. I think that I would like to see them involve more blind people, not just older people, but young people, so that they really get a sense of the spectrum.

Cooper: We talked to the inventor, and he's pretty aware. He said he started with low vision for a couple of reasons. One is sustainability, because it was a more economic place to go for the product, but that it was a more difficult and unique situation for people who are blind. But that is their intent, to move into that area.

Wonder: Yeah, he came and visited us here and brought it, because I saw the report about it on the Internet. It was impressive. I just want to see him get with a variety of people so that he gets a wide spectrum of real situations, if you know what I mean.

Cooper: The technology is already so incredible, the fact that you can point at something and with visual interpretation knows what you're pointing at. For instance it detects if there's a bus coming and what number it is. It's interesting, to say the least. I do think that your problem always is the economics of it.

Wonder: That's the other thing. These things cost a lot of money. What I'd like to see happen, really, is for some of this technology to be subsidized by the governments and by different corporations so that more blind people or not just for the blind, but any technology at all be more available for the person who doesn't have $2,000 or $1,500 or $1,000 or $5,000, to be able to purchase it. Part of that will happen by there being an incentive by the companies, from there being such a great demand based on it being subsidized by the various governments.

Cooper: Have you tried VOICEYE technology for print?

Wonder: The voice—?

Cooper: It's called VOICEYE. Coming out of South Korea. They had a booth at CSUN. They've got some of the Korean government putting VOICEYE code on the right-hand top page of printed material, and then your smartphone scans that code.

Martirosyan: Something like a QR code, but it's a very high-density code, and it reads out loud the full text of that page. Their article is in this issue.

Wonder: It can read anything that has that code on it?

Martirosyan: Yes. ABILITY Magazine *now is the first magazine that's doing that to its printed pages. You can scan the editorial pages of* ABILITY Magazine *and it will read out loud in 58 languages.*

Wonder: Really! What's going to take it to be in other magazines?

Cooper: It takes the publishers. I happen to publish the magazine, and even though we're on the web and have other forms of content, I wanted the print to be as accessible as possible. When we found out about that technology, we decided to keep testing it. It actually started with the Andrea Bocelli issue. If the government, for example, starts to do this and some leading companies, it can become standard practice. It takes a liitle extra time but doesn't cost much. VOICEYE is trying to create the standard so that people who are blind know where the code will be per page, always in the right top portion.

Wonder: So it's in the right-hand corner?

Cooper: Yes. We're not putting it there yet, because it's still in beta, and we're doing it more for low vision and people with reading challenges, so if you have dyslexia or low vision, you can scan it. We're going to put the higher resolution code on the cover that you're on—

this will be the first time. It may have to be placed over your face.

Wonder: *(laughs)* I don't see why you shouldn't do that.

(laughter)

Cooper: We're going to put it in the right-hand corner. It will read out loud everything on the cover, but on this one we'll have it go to the web. For that, there's another company called Capti Voice that we're working with. They have a playlist you can use on your iPhone that you can put different URLs on and whatever you're doing, you can be listening to all the webs you ever put on your playlist out loud. It was built for people who are blind.

Wonder: Are you saying it would read every page?

Cooper: Right now we have our editorial pages already coded, but it's not in the standard place, because we have too much artwork. The placement for our magazine is on the bottom middle of each editorial page. But as I previously mentioned, the standard will be for any printed material, whether it's an IRS form or text book, should be the top right-hand corner. The code will be put—

Wonder: So you're saying now it's set up so you have to see it to get to it?

Cooper: Yes, but starting with the Stevie Wonder issue, we'll put a code on the cover. The code will read out loud everything that's on the cover, only the cover, but also will have a link to the web, and it will include hearable articles from the whole magazine. You have to be web-connected. Our editorial code now has the content in the code.

Wonder: You're saying that certain parts of articles you can do, but you can't do the whole article?

Cooper: For the technology as it is, it's already high-density. So to be able to read out 750 words, let's say a whole page of text, which is a lot of data to hold in a small 2 dimensional box. For example, a QR code can give you all the information on a business card. But the VOICEYE code gives you the content of a whole page. There is no other technology like that right now.

Wonder: So then a person wouldn't have to worry about scanning the page and reading the—

Cooper: Again, that's just for the print. We already have all that on the web anyway. The web, whether it's Jaws or whatever you're reading, can read any HTML that's up there. That's pretty accessible once you get to the web. The question in my mind had always been, how do you make the page more accessible, rather than going to Braille? As you know, not everyone who's blind can read Braille. Plus, it's expensive to print a whole magazine that's all in Braille. It's just not feasible or cost-effective. You can't afford to do it. The solution was using VOICEYE technology. As Lia said, we're now the first magazine in the world to do that. When we're done with this, I'll show you a sample.

Wonder: Oh, great. That's exciting.

Cooper: The technology's really coming along, in every aspect.

Martirosyan: I was ready to jump into some musical questions. What are you working on now? Anything you can share with us?

Wonder: I'm working on, like, three different things. One, the next project that I plan to release, "Through the Eyes of Wonder." The next thing I'm working with is a project myself and David Foster are working on together. David has had this idea for a long time of me doing some of my old songs that I've done, previously recorded songs, with a symphony orchestra.

Martirosyan: Oh, beautiful.

Wonder: So differently than "Natural Wonder," this will be songs done in the studio with some members of the London Symphony Orchestra and others. The third is, I've been writing this since 2006, when my mother passed away. I promised her I would do an album called "Gospel Inspired by Lula." So I'm hoping to get that done, too.

Cooper: So you have—

Martirosyan: —not too much on your plate?

(laughter)

Wonder: Just a little bit. Not much.

Martirosyan: A daily routine of yours would be waking up and going to the studio?

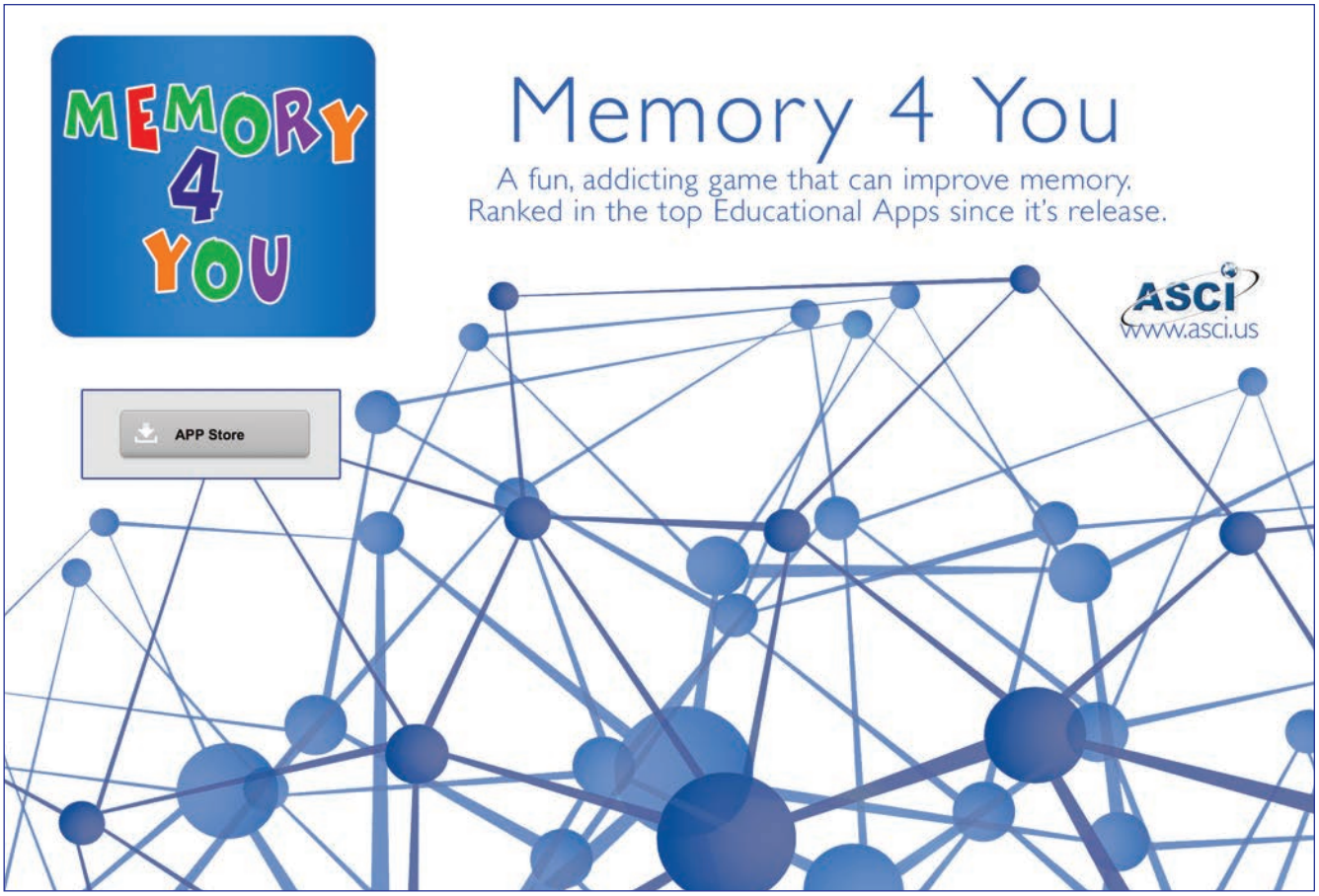
Wonder: My daily routine really is how to spend so much time playing the harpejji. I've been practicing on that, working with that.

Cooper: Interesting instrument.

Martirosyan: It is a very interesting instrument, and the first time I've seen it. Having dexterity issues with my fingers, I'm on a quest to find different types of instruments that can actually be incorporated and made my own. Anyway, I thought that was a pretty unique instrument. How long have you been playing it?

Wonder: Almost two years now.

Martirosyan: How do you prefer it to all the other



instruments you play?

Wonder: Well, it's a different kind of instrument. I love it. But it's definitely a different kind of instrument, sort of in between a guitar and something else.

Martirosyan: Have you written any songs with the harpejji yet?

Wonder: Oh, yeah, a lot of songs. Nothing that has been released. But yeah, definitely. An instrument is very much like a painter, where there's different colors. Every instrument brings out another kind of thing with it. This instrument definitely does bring out some other things.

Cooper: What do you think of when you say "colors"? What's in your mind when you talk about paint and colors?

Wonder: I think visual expressions, moods. I understand the difference between light and dark and bright, I understand those concepts based on what I've been told. But as well as what I'm able to imagine.

Cooper: So the clothing you're been wearing and your wonderful collaborator, he's choosing the colors that he thinks are your personality and somehow you're communicating this?

Wonder: I think it's not so much—he knows that I like texture, so I go with feeling the texture and with hearing him describe what it looks like. I'm with it or not with it. I'll express that.

Martirosyan: It's unmistakable.

Wonder: I love texture, and I love a variety of different things, African clothing, suits, casual stuff.

Cooper: You've always had a great style, there's some consistency in what you're wearing, at least in public, in the pictures we've seen of you and in your performances, which is really nice. You've done a really good job.

Wonder: I think the people around me Greg, Stephanie and there are various people that look after me. I'm ever wanting to do something new and different and contemporary.

Cooper: You mentioned that your mother passed away. Do you still stay connected with your siblings?

Wonder: Oh, yeah, definitely.

Cooper: There's several of you, how many, six?

Wonder: There was six, my brother passed away shortly after my mother.

Cooper: I'm sorry -



UN Peace Messenger Stevie Wonder with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

Wonder: There are five of us. We're close.

Cooper: So they live in Detroit?

Wonder: They're here.

Cooper: They're in California now?

Martirosyan: Are they all in music? Or just you?

Wonder: Just me.

Cooper: How about your children?

Wonder: They are. My daughter is a music director at my radio station. She sings as well.

Martirosyan: How's the radio station going? You've had that for a few years now.

Wonder: It's doing pretty good. She's been a great asset to the station.

Cooper: Other than music, what are your hobbies?

Wonder: I love sports. When I'm able to go bowling, I like that. I love air hockey. When the playoffs happen, I love basketball. When I'm able to, I go roller skating. But my most favorite thing is music. I love music, a lot.

Cooper: Did you ever try playing golf?

Wonder: No.

Cooper: Have you tried anything that you wouldn't typically think a person who's blind can do?

Wonder: Not really. I'm probably sure that if I were given something, the opportunity to learn a new sport, a new way of doing something, very similar to the harpejji, that was a very visual instrument. My challenge was to learn how to play it.

Cooper: It looks complicated. We looked at the keyboard and the strings and the buttons. It's like a combination computer, piano, guitar put together in some way. It's a pretty impressive machine.

Wonder: It really is. It's 16 strings. They make one with 24 strings, but those are mostly bass strings. But this one here, with 16 strings, you play it with both hands. You basically tap the notes, and you position the notes to create a chord. It's pretty exciting.

Martirosyan: Can you tap them with anything other than your fingertips?

Wonder: No, just your fingers. But it's not hard that you have to tap them.

Cooper: Can you tap with the knuckle?

Wonder: If you're able to get them in the position you want them, yeah.

Martirosyan: Maybe people in a similar situation as me could have something like a stylus to use. That would be interesting. I wanted to share something, a quick story with you. When my grandmother moved here from Armenia, one of the first ways she started learning English was through my translating a song, one of your songs. It was "I Just Called to Say I Love You."

Wonder: That's wonderful. So your family's from Armenia?

Martirosyan: Yes sir.

Wonder: That's wonderful.

Martirosyan: That was a fun way that I connected with her, because I love the song, too. It was a cool learning modality.

Cooper: Have you been to Armenia?

Wonder: No. What is the relationship now with Armenia and Russia?

Martirosyan: Superficially good relationship. There isn't too much going on right now. I think Russia's currently preoccupied with other situations.

Cooper: Lia speaks a little Russian.

Wonder: How do you say thank you?

Martirosyan: "Spasibo." Have you been to Russia?

Wonder: No.

Martirosyan: What's your favorite place of all the places you've gone, all the countries you've visited?

Wonder: I like Africa, West Africa. That was fun, going there. I like Brazil; it's always fun in Brazil.

Martirosyan: I feel like Brazil has a lot of energy.

Wonder: Oh, yeah, they really do. What was most impressive with me about Brazil the very first time I went was how much they love music. I love that.

Martirosyan: Did you write anything inspired by that type of music, that type of energy?

Wonder: I'm sure a lot of my stuff, whether it'd be "Don't You Worry About a Thing."

[Plays some rhythms from the song]

Wonder: That was something I did back in the day, when I first came, I did some stuff that was never released as of yet that was inspired by the music.

Cooper: Back to the world peace situation, music is a common denominator throughout the world. There are different forms of it, but the theme, the rhythm, the rhyme, the harmony of it all, you've encompassed that in most of your music. You're a perfect person, if you will, to be a representative for world peace.

Wonder: As much as I've been blessed to do, this is for me when I want to do what I really want to do as far as helping people. Obviously helping people with disabilities, I want—my desire is to in my lifetime be a very integral part of getting this country and the world completely accessible to everyone with any disability. There should be nowhere that we can't go, and there should be nothing that we can't do. Considering that we have the disability, whichever one it might be, we will be so on point with being able to do that we need little to no assistance.

Cooper: Another thing we're doing about accessibility is, we've partnered with a nonprofit called Amara, and they do crowd-sourcing for captioning videos in multiple languages. Our ABILITY Team has close to 200 hundred volunteers in different countries, different languages. This crowd-sourcing with volunteers for captioning in multiple languages is another example of bringing content access for people who use CC. It's another example of technology coming together to bring the world together.

Wonder: That's great, because the only way we can be on the same page is to know what the other is doing. We can agree that we agree.

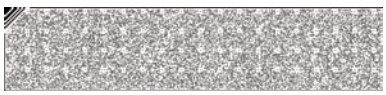
Cooper: I agree. Do you agree?

Martirosyan: I agree.

Wonder: [Sings the word Yay] piano notes

Cooper: I noticed that you had also worked with a broad range of different disability organizations. Special Olympics, you did something with them, Paralympics, sometimes people confuse the two, I'm always surprised. Are you talking to people like Tim Shriver? Do you know him?

Wonder: Oh, yeah, I know Tim. We've done his foundation, and we've done others. My thing is basically anything that brings to light conditions that the world needs to look at, and the world needs to cheer with their accomplishments, I'm all the way there.




United Nations Messenger of Peace

Cooper: Do you remember which Paralympics you went to? You didn't go to the one in Russia recently.

Wonder: Greece. It was great in Greece. I remember every night we'd go to the disco club. It was crazy, that little disco place.

Martirosyan: What was accessibility like in Greece?

Wonder: I'm usually traveling with people who will show me around, so it's difficult for me to know to what degree they had it set up. I was happy to know that they were committed to hosting that event. I think every time there's an opportunity to make people aware of something, and a country steps up and says, "OK, we want to, we say that we're supportive and we host the event and we're committed to doing everything that we can to join the family of helping people with disabilities to go further."

Cooper: Are you going to the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities)? Each year they've been holding the CRPD event at the UN. Did they ask you to attend this one?

Wonder: Yes, I am attending. I'll be there at the opening.

Cooper: That would be great. We're having a panel ourselves during the conference that will be discussing assistive technologies. Matter of fact, the magazine will be there; we'll be distributing this issue at the UN.

Wonder: Oh, great!

Cooper: There's also a conference in DC called the M-Enabling Summit. It brings all the technology companies together, Google, Facebook, IBM, Microsoft, they're all there, and it's about bringing the cell phone. This year more people will access their smartphone than their desktop. It's a shift in where we're getting our information. So this M-Enabling Summit is talking with governments and big business to make sure that everything they do is accessible on the smartphone platform, both Droid and iPhone. And of course Apple and Samsung will be there.

Wonder: You think that Samsung are trying to do as much as Apple?

Cooper: They're trying. There's something that came out about how their newest line is more accessible than in the past. I haven't read it yet. I just saw a press release.

Wonder: The speech is good. It's a little clumsy, but it's not bad.

Cooper: I'll demonstrate how the scan works real quick. I'm opening up ABILITY Magazine. I'll use the smartphone—

Wonder: Which one are you using?

Cooper: A Samsung. I've always been an Apple person, but when it came to the phone, the Samsung. For me it's a little bit better than the iPhone.

Wonder: Maybe because I'm—I am fairly good with typing, using my hands with the phone, even as much as I use the focus button.

Cooper: On this phone, I downloaded the VOICEYE app. It's a free app, and there's a stand that is used to put the phone on, to stabilize it.

Wonder: That speech that I heard is different from the Samsung phone. That's not the same as Samsung, right?

Martirosyan: Yes, it's the same, using TTS, from his phone. I think he has a newer version of Samsung.

Cooper: There are new voices coming out. That Capti



that I was telling you about, which you can use on your iPhone, when you download Capti and then put the different URLs that you want to listen to later in a playlist, you'll have different choices of really nice voices.

Wonder: When's that coming out?

Cooper: The new voices, I'm not sure yet, I'll keep you posted.

Wonder: Okay great!

Cooper: Speaking of voices, I don't know if you remember, but we mentioned that Lia is an opera singer.

Wonder: Yes, I do remember that. You should sing at my annual Holiday Toys for Kids fundraiser.

Martirosyan: I'd love to.

[Turns to everyone in the room]

Did everyone hear that? It's not everyday Stevie Wonder invites you to sing!

(laughter)

Cooper: Before we end our conversation, I know there was a time that you were looking at maybe some operation through Johns Hopkins? Anything coming through, a potential operation?

Wonder: No, I was not eligible for the technology they're working with. It was because after X amount of years, the actual nerve begins to die, the use of it. So because of my—

Cooper: —it atrophied?

Wonder: Yeah, we call it retinopathy or something like that.

Cooper: So you did get tested?

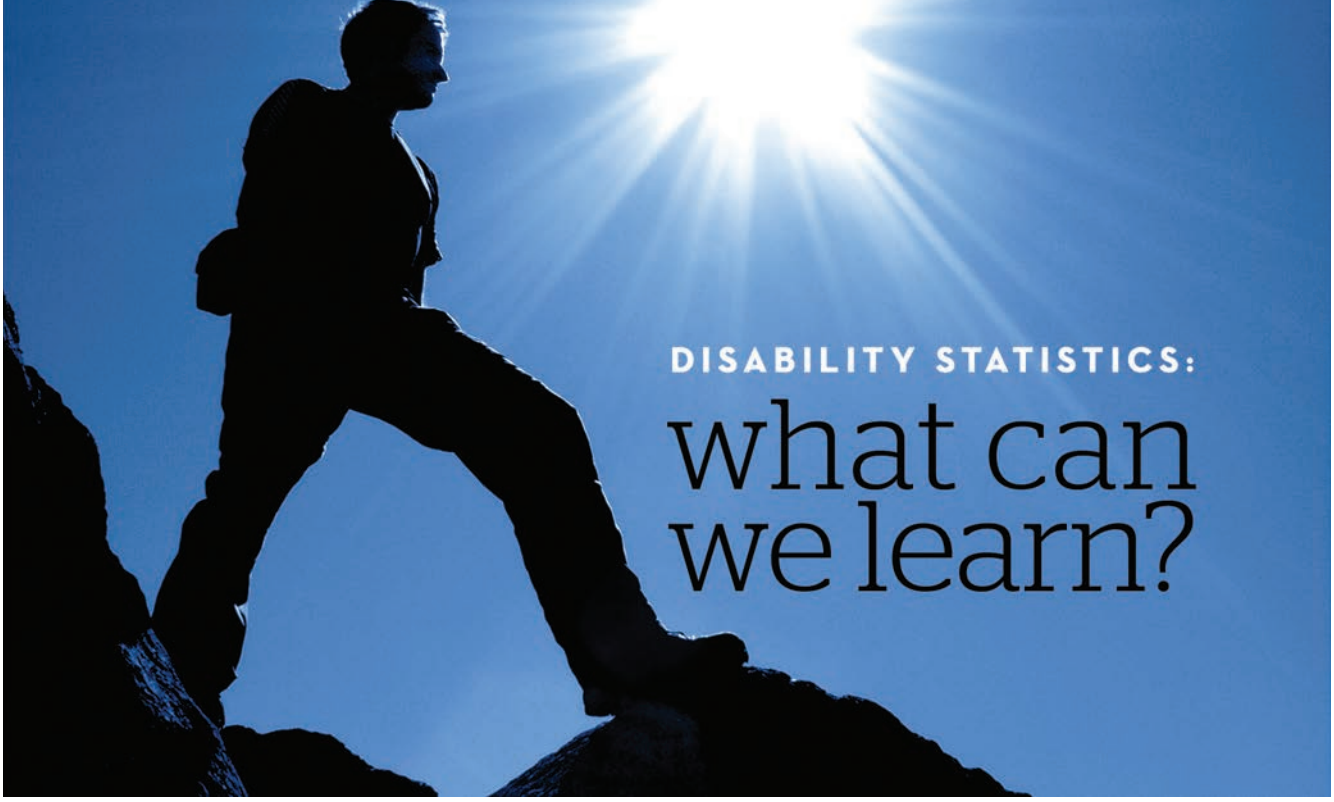
Wonder: Yes.

Cooper: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Wonder: I want to thank you for coming and seeing a little bit of my world and allowing me to speak again on my commitment to life and spreading the message and the word about how we must make the world accessible. The world, not just one particular country or city or area, but the entire world, accessible and available for every single one with any disability. If you're commitment is not there, it is non-forgiving, as far as I'm concerned. So let's handle it. Let's do the damn thing.

■ ABILITY

un.org
un.org/disabilities



Why do we need disability statistics?

Statistics on disability can assist policy makers, advocates, service providers, and others to understand issues and trends around disability. Understanding the characteristics of the population of individuals with disabilities can help to make realistic plans (e.g., housing development planners can identify how many accessible housing units are needed in a community) and develop better policies (e.g., identify areas in need of special transportation and services in case of natural emergencies).

However, accessing current statistics can be challenging, and even what is meant by disability is different from what you might think. For example, using two different national surveys to estimate the number of people with disabilities can give radically different results. According the American Community Survey (ACS) in 2012 there were 37.6 million individuals with a disability in the U.S. (12.1%), but that is much lower than the estimate for the 2010 The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP 2010), which estimates 56.7 million people. One of the issues is how to define disability. There are dozens of definitions used by federal programs alone, so it is not surprising that there is not a simple way to inquire about disability on a survey. However, the definition and the survey questions used make a big difference in how many people are counted as having a disability.

Understanding Disability Prevalence using the ACS

The ACS is the only national survey that allows us to get disability statistics at a local level. The ACS uses six basic disability types in its definition of disability and the prevalence varies based on the disability type. The most common is an ambulatory disability with 6.9% of people reporting difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Many people have multiple disabilities - over half of persons reporting a disability in the ACS report have more than one of the six types of disability.

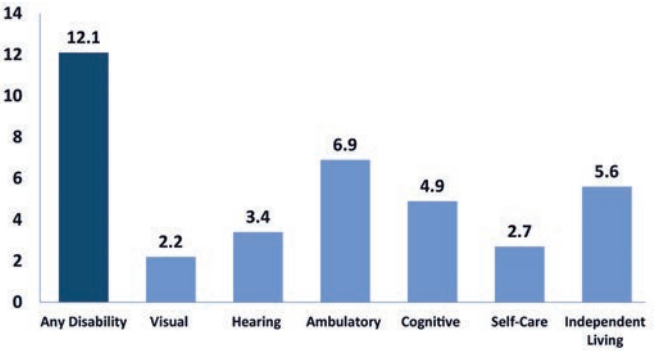
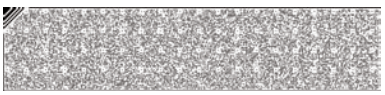


Figure 1. Percent of U.S Population with a Disability
Erickson, W. Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2014). 2012 Disability Status Report: United States. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI).

Disability prevalence (percent of population with a disability) varies by a variety of factors including geographic location and age. As shown in in the map below, there is wide variability in disability prevalence with higher rates in the Southeast and lower rates in the upper Midwest. It is unclear why exactly there is such geographic variability, but it is likely influenced by access to and quality of healthcare, poverty, working conditions, or other factors. Age is also a very important factor and has important implications as the baby boomers move into their 60's and 70's. As shown in Figure 3, the prevalence of disability is 10% for



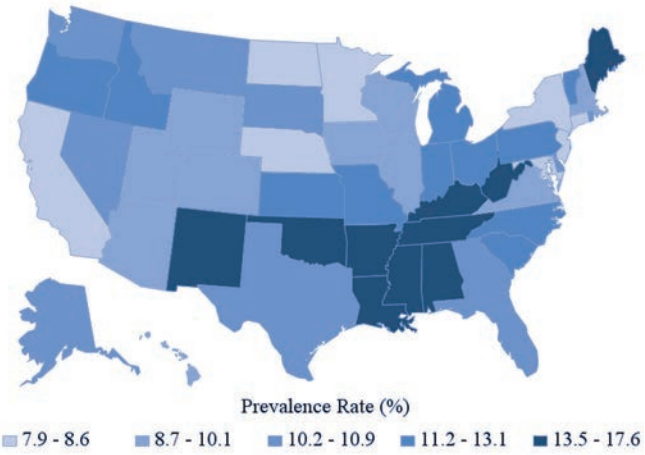


Figure 2. Disability Prevalence Rate (non-institutionalized population, all ages)
Adapted from: Erickson, W. Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2014). 2012 Disability Status Report: United States. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI).

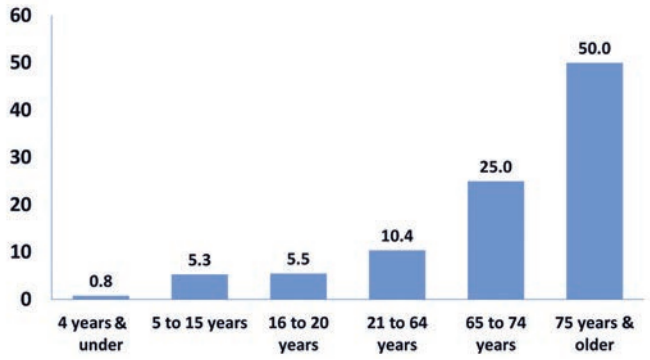


Figure 3. Disability Prevalence by Age Group
Erickson, W. Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2014). 2012 Disability Status Report: United States. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI).

working-age individuals, but increases to 25% of those 65-74 years old and to 50% for those 75 years old and over.

How can I learn more about Disability Statistics?

Cornell University has developed an easy to use site to access disability statistics at a state or national level. On that site you can access a wealth of information regarding disability prevalence by age, race, gender, and ethnicity. The site also provides comparisons with the non-disabled population on important indicators including employment, household income, poverty, Social Security Income (SSI) receipt, and educational attainment. Other sources of disability data include the U.S. Census Bureau's American Factfinder website where you can access a variety of statistics including detailed disability employment tabulations for thousands of geographic entities across the U.S. Monthly employment estimates by disability status can be accessed on the Bureau of Labor Statistics site.

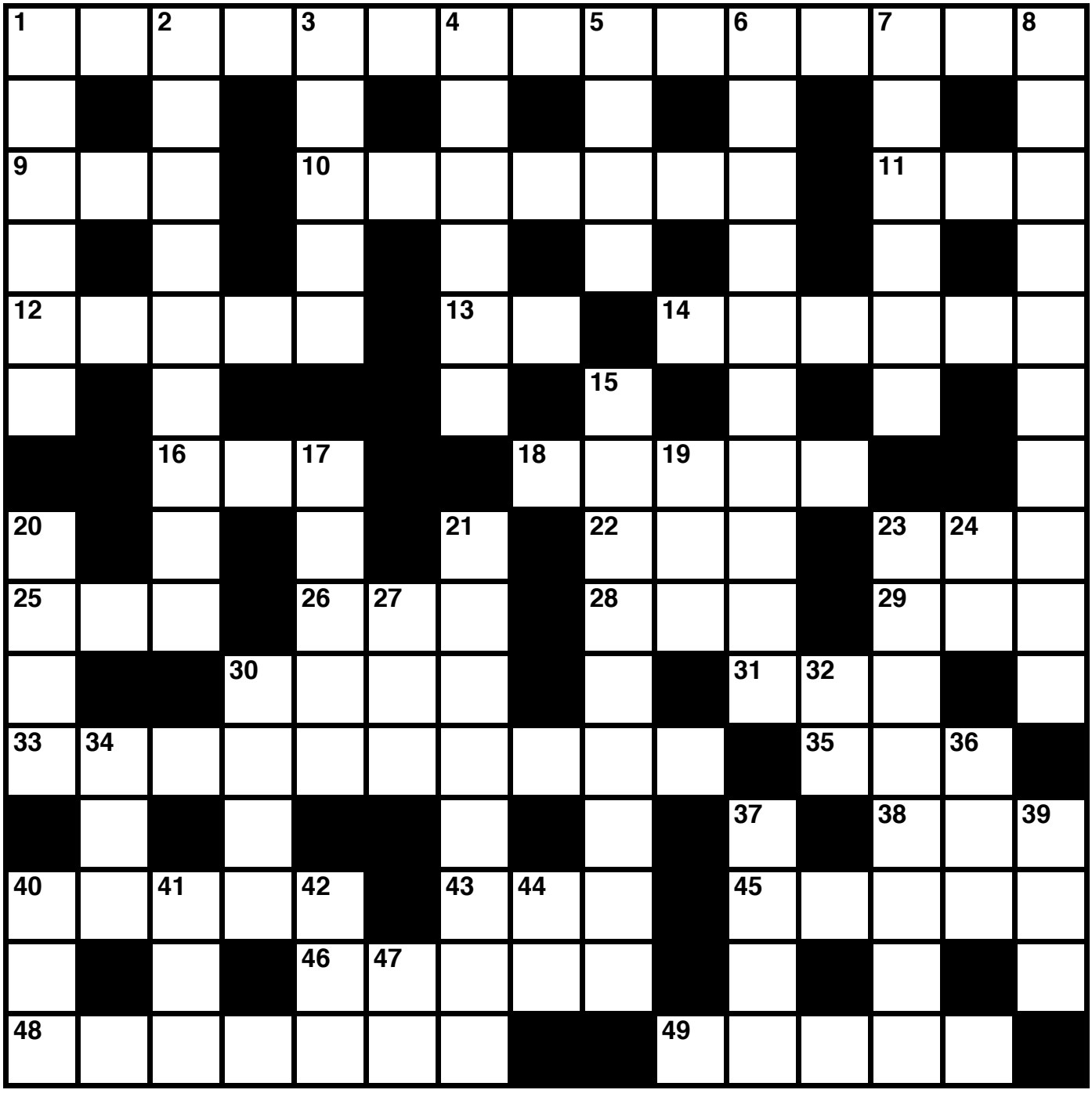
Accurate assessment of the numbers of people with disabilities in the U.S. is critical for effective planning at the local, state, and federal levels. With good information, planners and policy makers can have a great impact on the lives of people with disabilities at work, at home and in the community. ■ ABILITY

by William Erickson and Sarah von Schrader

disabilitystatistics.org
factfinder2.census.gov
bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability.htm



ABILITY's



Crossword Puzzle



HUMAN RIGHTS AND DISABILITY ADVOCACY

Edited by Maya Sabatello and Marianne Schulze

"The authors have embarked on a fascinating, original, and groundbreaking project to tell the story of how the CRPD came to be."—Michael Perlin, New York Law School

Human Rights and Disability Advocacy brings together vivid and personal accounts from individual representatives of the Disabled People's Organizations, nongovernmental organizations, indigenous peoples' organizations, states, and national institutions that played leading roles in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Contributors include Andrew Byrnes, Heidi Forrest, Phillip French, Lex Grandia, Huhana Hickey, Markku Jokinen, Liisa Kauppinen, Mi Yeon Kim, Gerison Lansdown, Connie Laurin-Bowie, Tirza Leibowitz, Don MacKay, Anna MacQuarrie, Ronald C. McCallum AO, Tara J. Melish, Pamela Molina Toledo, Maya Sabatello, Marianne Schulze, and Belinda Shaw.

2013 | 320 pages
Cloth | $59.95 | £39.00

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Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1 Long haul Paul's journey for MS (3 words)
9 Promise of a payback
10 Film where Al Pacino plays a cop who won't compromise his integrity
11 Chekov's rank in Star Trek, abbreviation
12 ___ and aahed
13 Movie "The Life of __"
14 Steady and firm
16 Name of the robot being used to help educate autistic children
18 Harry Potter's magic instruments
22 Site of the 2014 Soccer World cup
23 Something to scribble on
25 U2's was "Beautiful"
26 Vote that helps pass bills
28 Former Chinese NBA star Ming
29 Parisian street
30 ____ Blanc pen
31 "Call Me Maybe" singer Carly ___ Jepsen
33 Brilliant guitarist who lost his abilities due to an accident and then relearned to play his instrument overcoming dystonia, Billy ____
35 Crack pilot
38 The Beatles' "__ the Walrus" (2 words)
40 "No Greatness without Goodness" by Randy ____
43 "___ the Dog" (1997 DeNiro film)
45 Love a lot
46 Much loved tablets
48 Movie about a quadriplegic who becomes a writer, "My Left Foot, The Story of ____ Brown"
49 Scrooge's scary visitor

DOWN

1 "Blind Film Critic" Tommy _____
2 Indomitable motorcyclist Hall of Famer who continues to race after being paralyzed (2 words)
3 Made less painful
4 Cartoon dog who said "I ain't no stupid beagle"
5 "How clumsy of me!"
6 Film starring William Macy as a man whith cerebral palsy who is determined to become a salesman (3 words)
7 The Ducks of the N.C.A.A.
8 Lynn Anderson song, "I never promised you a ____ " (2 words)
15 Founder of Born to Act Players where young people with Down syndrome learn to act and sing (2 words)
17 Katy Perry's "Thinking ___ " (2 words)
19 Actress Vardalos of "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"
20 Movie about a man with Asperger's Syndrome, starring Rose Byrne and Hugh Dancy
21 "Les Miserables" star who is involved with Step Up Women's Network and St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, Anne ___
23 Name of a film where the main character has a child with Down Sydrome, based on the novel "Push" by Sapphire
24 Gold symbol
27 Chang's Siamese twin
30 W. African country
32 Battery size
34 Signal
36 A musical talent
37 He walked "The Line"
39 Sister in "Little Women"
40 Corporation type
41 Desert Storm e.g.
42 Venus, to Serena
44 Found on a billboard
47 Point, for short

answers on page 62

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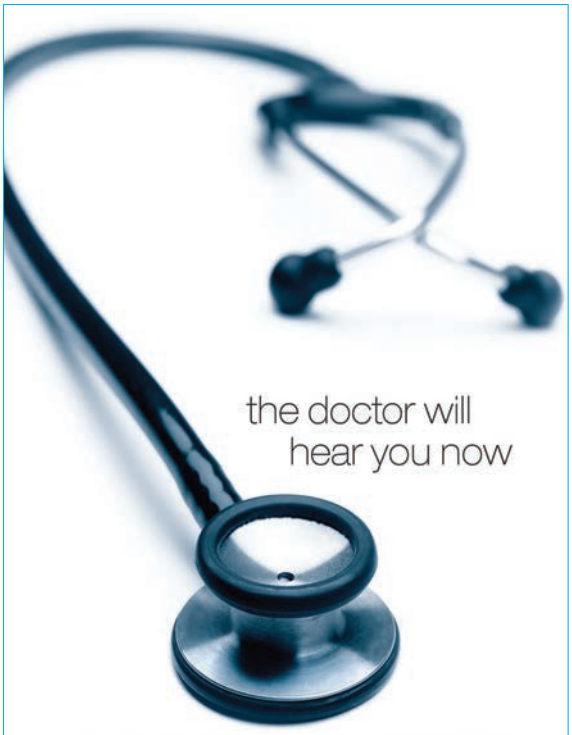
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Universities across the nation are on a time line to make sure the technology they use is accessible to blind and low vision students. Some of the largest and most prominent universities in the country are taking additional steps to create an environment of equality, where blind students can pursue their educational and career aspirations, without unnecessary barriers. ViewPlus can help all schools and universities provide equal access to curriculum, for every member of the learning community.

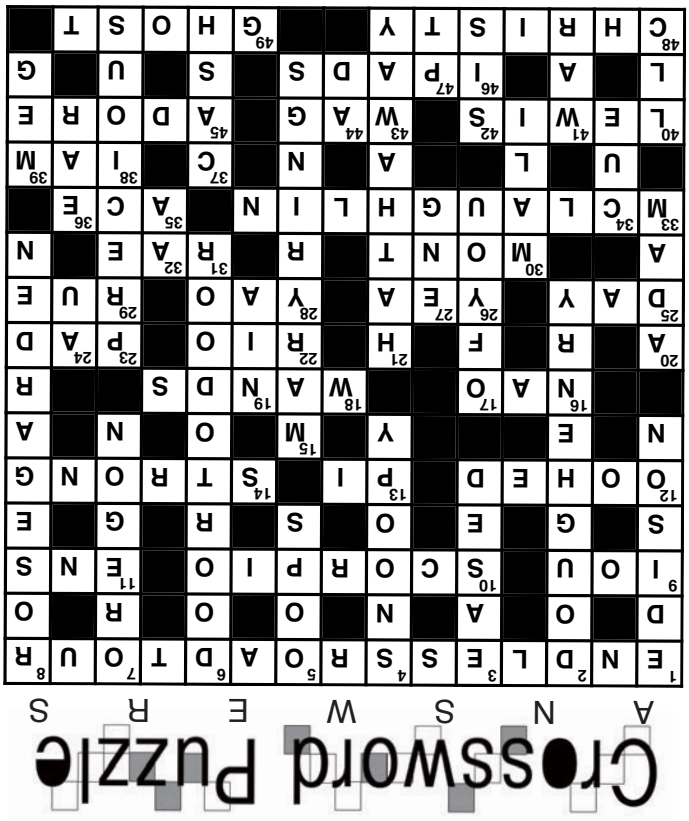
ViewPlus Technologies has been delivering accessibility solutions to universities and government agencies, around the world, since 1996. The mission? To make all static and electronic information used on campuses fully accessible to blind citizens, students, faculty, and staff. Course assignments, documents, classroom technology, library resources, banking services, and much more, are now accessible in a variety of output resources from ViewPlus.

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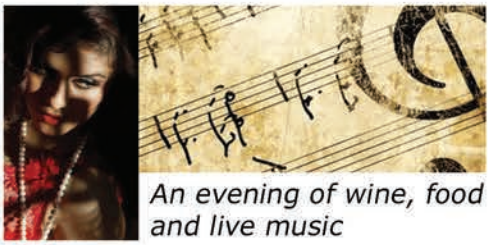












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Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst

EMPLOYMENT FIRST - EMPLOYMENT NOW

Conference Highlights:
Opening - Commissioner Janet LaBreck (RSA) and Assistant Secretary Michael Yudin (OSERS)



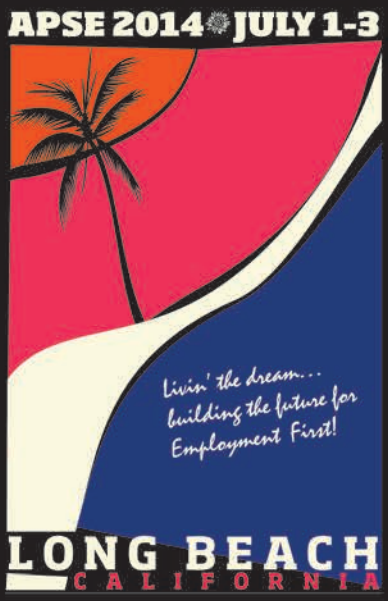
Day 1 Keynote:
Ray Bradford
SAG-AFTRA



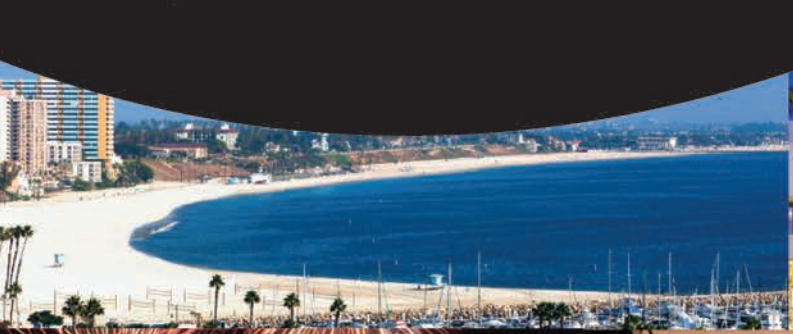
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David Hoff
National APSE President



Day 3 Keynote:
Kevin Breel
Comedian & Mental Health Advocate



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- **Parents of children with Spina Bifida** learn innovative ways to help your children grow into independent and active adults
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- **Medical Professionals** sharpen clinical skills and gain insight into cutting edge therapies

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InfoTech

BIT's 3rd Annual World Congress of Emerging InforTech-2014

Data: June 19-20, 2014 Venue: Dalian World Expo Center, China

InfoTech-2014 is proposing an ambitious and unique program based around major themes involving digital society and opportunities, and will feature an exciting line-up of keynote speakers and intense breakout sessions, where lively and interactive debates will take place among the delegates. The 3 Newly Launched Sectors are a well planned as Parallel Thematic Forums, Frontier Technological Program, and IT/ICT Business Matchmaking and Career Fairs

IMPORTANT DEADLINES

Sep. 30, 2013	Start Date for Abstract Submissions
Sep. 30, 2013	Start Date for Online Early Bird Registrations
Dec. 31, 2013	Deadline for Online Early Bird registration
Feb. 15, 2014	Second Round of Abstract Submissions
Mar. 30, 2014	Last Round of Abstract Submissions
Apr. 30, 2014	Deadline for Cancellation of Hotel Reservations
Apr. 30, 2014	Deadline for Abstract Submission
May 5, 2014	Deadline for Submitting Materials to be Included in the Conference Proceedings

Congress Time

Registration: 08:00-18:00, June 18, 2014
Exhibition Booth Setup: 14:30-17:30, June 18, 2014
Opening Ceremony & Keynote Forum: 09:00-12:00, June 19, 2014

Congress Venue

Dalian World Expo Center
Add: No. 10, F Area, Xinghai Square, Dalian, Liaoning Province, China

PROGRAM LAYOUT

Sector 1:
Parallel Thematic Forums

Sector 2:
Frontier Technological Program

Sector 3:
IT/ICT Business Matchmaking and Career Fair

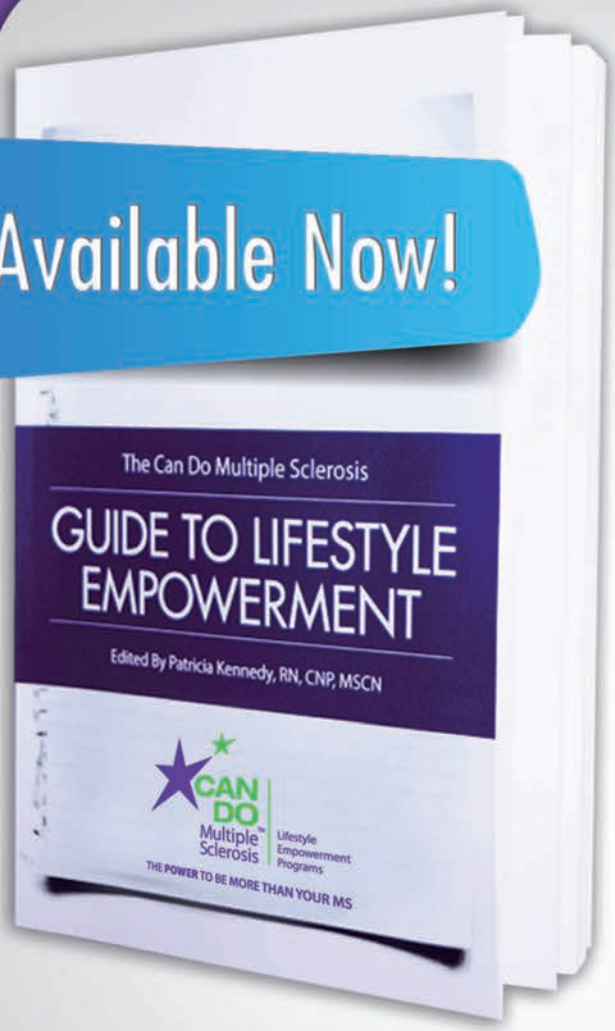
Sector 4:
IT Certificate Training Courses and Workshops

Sector 5:
Social Activities

Sector 6: IT/ICT EXPO

http://www.bitcongress.com/InfoTech2014/default.asp

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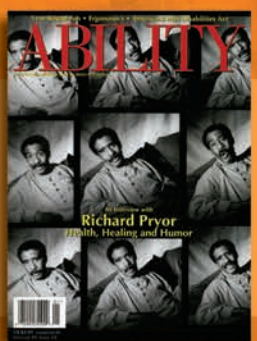
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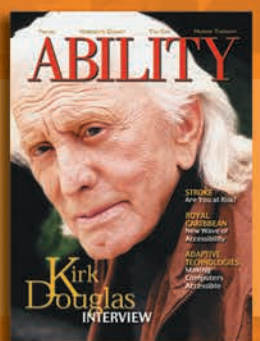
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