



SOUTH DAKOTA

COALITION
OF CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES

Focus on Abilities

Volume 28, Issue 2

March/April 2019

BOARD MEMBERS:

Tom Kober

Margot Burton

Matt Cain

Vicki Kerkvliet

Dave Miller

Jerald Zeigler, Jr.

STAFF:

Shelly Pfaff

Faith Korkow

WEBSITE:

www.sd-ccd.org

President's Thoughts...

Happy Spring, and greetings from your President.

I'm writing this with a happy face, looking outside the window and seeing the grass becoming green and our wildlife coming back into the yard! We've had a tough winter, and now we're dealing with flooding all over the place. I'm hoping that goes away quickly, so we can move on into our daily Spring routines. I hope that you are doing great.

For the Coalition's part, we are on a transition path. As you might know, our Executive Director, Shelly Pfaff, announced her retirement effective in January of 2020. That has changed the picture for the Coalition, and we, the board of directors, have been focusing on the future of the organization since she notified us of a definite date.

We are working very hard to explore possibilities for the future. We have been meeting frequently to focus on this work; exploring our financial status, our mission and how we might reorganize. The big issue facing us is how to design the organization so it can be financially sustained in the future. The Coalition is running well on a day to day basis, but if a large expenditure occurs that we would have to wait for reimbursement on, we would face a crisis.

We've taken some steps to lessen the financial realities related to staff. Faith is no longer a permanent part-time staff. We are now employing her as a temporary part-time staff for a limited time. We've also reduced Shelly's hours to 32 hours a week. Both steps have had a positive impact on our overall financial picture.

I want to thank you for your recent contributions of monetary support. These are a big blessing, and we are grateful for your continuing belief in our work. If you can continue to contribute – great; if not, we continue to be grateful for your support in other ways.

We are very grateful to have our Executive Director with her passion and commitment to the work of the organization. Thank you, Shelly, for your persistence to improve the quality of life for all South Dakotans.

In closing, be assured that when the Board reaches any decisions on the future of the organization, you will be informed immediately. Until then, we appreciate your thoughts and support as we explore what might be ahead.

Let's focus on doing our best for the remainder of 2019! Let us know what we can do for you, and any thoughts you have for what may lie ahead. Until next time...

Tom

Executive Director's Notes...

In May 1897, the great American humorist, novelist and social critic Samuel Clemens - best known as Mark Twain - was in London. While there, someone started a rumor that he was gravely ill. It was followed by a rumor that he had died.

According to a widely-repeated legend, one major American newspaper actually printed his obituary and, when Twain was told about this by a reporter, he said, "The reports of my death are exaggerated."

Recently, I was in a meeting with our Board, and one of them told me that he had heard from some staff that I was retiring in May. If I may, I'm going to borrow from Mr. Twain and change the quote up a bit to say, "The reports of my retirement are a bit premature, at least to my knowledge at this time."

Yes, I have shared a date with the Board in January of 2020 as my final day with the Coalition. It is time - I believe - for me and the organization that I step aside and we see what the future holds in store for all of us.

Now, I understand where the "May" probably came. I've been sharing with friends that I initially spoke with the Board about wishing to leave no sooner than May - I reach the magic full retirement age next month - and no later than January 2020. And since often times, friends cross into our career lives - well, I can see how some may have heard an earlier date.

But enough about an event yet to come. Let's talk about the present - for that is truly all we have - this moment, right now!

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to come to work every day and work in an effort to make a difference in the lives of others! I honestly love what I do, and I know how fortunate I am.

I am grateful for the support that board, members, staff and colleagues, current and past, have given me. I have done my best. I will continue to do my best for as long as I am working for you. Because of your support, and belief in the mission and work of the Coalition, we have and are making a difference! We have seen change for the better! Yet, there is still work to be done!

The Coalition formed at a time when the passage and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was a focal point of the disability community. In July, we'll celebrate the 29th anniversary of the signing of the ADA into law. Much has changed, yet much has not.

People with disabilities are still twice as likely to be unemployed as people without disabilities in many places.

People with disabilities are more than twice as likely to live in poverty than people without disabilities.

Many people with disabilities who wish to live in their own homes and communities still encounter barriers to doing so.

The Disability Integration Act (DIA) is bipartisan legislation that ensures people with disabilities have a right to live and receive services in their homes. The DIA (S.117/H.R.555) was introduced on January 15th by Senators Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Cory Gardner (R-CO) and Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI). It seeks to create a comprehensive solution, assuring the full integration of people with disabilities in the community. (To learn more information about DIA, go to www.DisabilityIntegrationAct.org)

The DIA is only one effort to address the work still needing to be done.

Access to healthcare, transportation, housing, behavioral health services and so much more continue to be areas where work needs to continue if we are to reach a time when "full inclusion" is truly achieved!

And it will happen only if we, each of us, works for needed change individually, and through our involvement with various organizations within our communities.

We have seen change for the better because of the efforts of those before us and our previous efforts. We will continue to see change if as Tom said in his message, we do "do our best in the remainder of 2019" and beyond!

Take care!

Shelly