

DRC NEWS

Senator King Delivers Keynote Address at DRC's 13th Annual Membership Dinner



Many years ago, prior to the 1990 passage of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA), now-Senator Angus King stood before Portland City Hall's imposing entrance alongside disability rights advocate Kim Wallace. Upon seeing that Mr. Wallace, who used a wheelchair, was unable to ascend the building's granite steps, Senator King realized how different, and sometimes challenging, the world is for people with disabilities. Although it has been nearly 24 years since the ADA became law, and while the world has definitely changed since then, everyday barriers still exist for people with disabilities. In that moment with Mr. Wallace, Senator King came to realize that these barriers exist and he understands that we still have work to do. Perhaps that is why, notably, he is the only U.S. Senator to convene a disability advisory committee, which provides him input on issues and proposed legislation impacting people with disabilities.

At DRC's October 18, 2013 Annual Dinner, Senator King stood before a packed room of over 200 guests and spoke of life's "a-ha" moments and the need for society to realize that people with disabilities are no longer invisible. Senator King grew up during the time of the Civil Rights Movement and he experienced integration first-hand when his high school became one the first in Virginia to admit black students.

Similar to the efforts in the Civil Rights Movement, disability rights activists must remain vigilant in ensuring that people with disabilities are integral members of society. They should not be shuttered away in institutions and hospitals. People with disabilities should be allowed opportunities for meaningful employment, not be forced to work in sheltered workshops or be placed on state and federal benefits for life. Government, businesses and individuals alike must continue to work to break down barriers and promote access. As Procter & Gamble's David Bartage remarked when accepting the 2013 Business Award, *we all benefit when people with disabilities are included*. This applies not only to the work place, but to all aspects of everyday life.



Each of this year's advocacy award recipients exemplifies the very definition of inclusion and, like Senator King, their efforts ensure that people with disabilities are no longer invisible. Lydia Richard has dedicated her life to raising awareness about the struggles faced by individuals with mental illness. While at UNUM, Gil Broberg spearheaded efforts to raise disability awareness and develop education initiatives within the company. Procter & Gamble's Tambrands facility in Lewiston has launched an integrated employment initiative in which individuals both with and without disabilities work alongside one another, performing the same tasks, earning the same wages and receiving the same employment benefits.

Meet DRC's Newest Staff Members!

Caleb Baker, Patient Advocate

A Maine native, Caleb Baker is a 2013 graduate of Western New England University School of Law and spent his undergraduate years at St. Michael's College in Colchester, VT. Upon graduation from St. Michael's, Caleb spent three years working at the HowardCenter in Burlington, VT. The HowardCenter serves children and adults with Autism, developmental disabilities, substance abuse issues, and serious and persistent mental illness. Caleb's passion for mental health advocacy led him to continue working for the Center during his summer breaks from law school. He says he has always known that he wanted to work in mental health advocacy, so when the advocate position at the Acadia Hospital became available, he jumped at the opportunity. Caleb is an avid chess player and, when not attending classes at St. Michael's, he volunteered his time teaching chess to students at the Saint Francis Xavier School. This love of volunteerism extended through law school when he served as a mentor with Big Brother / Big Sister of Hampden County, MA. Caleb is a die-hard Frank Zappa fan and is most at home playing the guitar (acoustic and electric).



Kevin Voyvodich, Esq., Patient Advocate

DRC also extends a warm welcome to Kevin Voyvodich, Esq., the new mental health advocate at the Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center (DDPC). After graduating from the New England School of Law in 2010, Kevin practiced both Title and Mortgage law before joining DRC. Kevin's prior work history, which included working at Spring Harbor Hospital, as well as serving on the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee in Boston, gave him the necessary experience to be able to take on the position of mental health advocate at one of Maine's two state-run psychiatric facilities. In applying for this position, Kevin wrote that his prior experiences "instilled in him the desire to build a career around helping and advocating for those living with mental illness and...also gave him the ability to understand the need to link people with mental illness with much needed resources." Kevin majored in history while an undergraduate student at the University of Tampa and also worked for two years as a Conservation Technician for the Maine Historical Society.



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Lydia Richard, Helen M. Bailey Advocacy Award Recipient

The Disability Rights Center (DRC) is pleased to honor Lydia Richard as the 2013 recipient of the Helen M. Bailey Advocacy Award. Lydia has over 20 years of experience in the mental health consumer movement here in Maine, advocating for the rights of people with psychiatric labels and mental illness. Lydia has been a tireless and zealous advocate for positive change in the lives of Maine citizens.

Lawyers and advocates working in DRC's Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness (PAIMI) program, have worked closely with Lydia for many years. She readily assists mental health advocates in assessing programs and in developing position statements.

Lydia has gone from being on full disability to being gainfully employed and currently is looking to continue her advocacy efforts. She worked as the Administrative Assistant for the Advocacy Initiative Network where she now volunteers. She also volunteers as the Board President for Maine Mental Health Connections, President of the Mid-Maine Aktion Club and sits on various committees including Maine Quality Counts Consumer Advisory Council, HealthInfoNet Consumer Advisory Committee and the Mental Health Parity Coalition.

Lydia also serves on the Disability Rights Center's PAIMI Advisory Council which advises DRC on the priorities and projects undertaken by our PAIMI program.

Lydia resides in Milo with her husband Tim and dog Jack.

The Disability Rights Center thanks Lydia for her many years of steadfast commitment to making Maine a better place for people with disabilities to live.



The Disability Rights Center seeks public comment on our Program Priorities throughout the year.

To submit a comment, please send an e-mail to advocate@drcme.org.

Gil Broberg, 2013 Access for All Award Recipient

DRC is pleased to present our 2013 Equal Access for All Award to Gil Broberg who has strongly advocated for true equal access for people with disabilities for more than 40 years. Gil has focused his disability advocacy on increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities, improving physical access to goods and services in our communities and promoting full inclusion.



Gil worked at Unum Insurance Company in Portland, Maine for 25 years. While at Unum Gil founded the People with Disabilities Affinity Group to develop disability awareness and education initiatives, to help revise policies and procedures and to assist in eliminating access barriers. He also oversaw the creation of “A Day in the Life”, an annual 3 day event at UNUM of presentations, workshops and experiential activities by and about employees with disabilities to increase awareness and knowledge of disability issues. And he developed curriculum and presented numerous “disability etiquette” trainings to expand awareness of how to communicate and interact with people with disabilities.

Gil has presented training on issues impacting corporate employment of people with disabilities at conferences including Businesses for Social Responsibility, the U.S. Department of Labor, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Hate Crimes Taskforce of the Maine Attorney General’s office, LIONS International, and others. Gil earned his Bachelor of Science in Business and Economics from the University of Southern Maine. He is a veteran of the United States Air Force.

Gil served on the Board of Directors of Alpha One, Maine’s independent living center. He is a member of Disabled American Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America. He is the past chair of the Board of Directors of the Maine Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. He was a member of the Maine Governor’s Committees for Supported Employment and for Employment of People with Disabilities, he served on the Board of the Maine Association of Handicapped Persons, Goodwill’s Business Advisory Council & Maine Medical Center’s Mental Health Employer’s Consortium.

Gil was also a valuable member of the Board of Directors of the Disability Rights Center for more than 10 years and he is a current member of Senator Angus King’s Disability Advisory Committee.

Gil is married and he and his wife Laurie have two grown children living in Maine. Gil and Laurie live in Yarmouth.

Procter & Gamble's Tambrands facility—Flexicenter Initiative 2013 Business Award

The Disability Rights Center is pleased to recognize Procter and Gamble's (P&G) Tambrands facility in Auburn for their FlexiCenter initiative for which they have hired nearly 40 people with disabilities. The FlexiCenter facility, in concert with the Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, provides new employment opportunities for individuals with physical and developmental disabilities.

P&G is a company rooted in providing opportunities to individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, cultures, talents and abilities. The job opportunities that they were able to create at the Auburn plant allowed them to further diversify and broaden their workforce while also providing good jobs for Mainers with disabilities.



It is an all inclusive work environment where people with and without disabilities work side by side, earning the same pay, receiving the same benefits and being held to the same productivity and workplace standards.

P&G's Auburn site is the sole manufacturer of Tampax tampons in North America and makes more than 10 million tampons a day. The facility has some 500 employees, many of whom oversee machines that in 15 minutes can pump out a lifetime supply of tampons. Although the plant is mostly automated, with silent robots gliding up and down its wide corridors, P&G needed a new production center to handle customized orders including, for example, tampon boxes with different packaging shipped to England or Korea.

While the company was planning its new customization center, P&G executive Miguel Garcia, whose daughter has Down syndrome, proposed staffing it with workers with disabilities. To research Garcia's idea, several P&G staff visited a Walgreens distribution center in South Carolina where 40% of the workers have a disability. They were inspired by what they saw and knew they could be successful in Auburn, Maine. So they began hiring - retired teachers, college students, single mothers - people of all ages with and without disabilities.

Procter and Gamble celebrates that beyond decreasing their turnover, boosting their public image, elevating workplace morale and creating an even more inclusive environment, hiring workers with disabilities is also a practical solution to staffing needs - especially as Maine's baby boomers retire.

The Disability Rights Center is pleased to present our 2013 Business Award to Procter and Gamble.

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