

we must lead the way . . .

LABEL JARS, NOT PEOPLE

LABEL JARS, NOT PEOPLE reads a sign on the wall. It's a reminder that good manners and respect are necessary as we communicate with others, and that includes people with disabilities.

Individuals are much more than the disabilities they have. Perhaps we're speaking of someone working in an office. Maybe she's the daughter of a friend or he's the parent of a child in your neighborhood. Since all of us are "people first," it's important to remember that each of us has many qualities that describe us. Red hair, green eyes, a petite figure or an orange jacket tells us something about the person.

We can be the leaders as we use correct terms and appropriate language. We promote inclusion, self-determination and transition, when we can set the tone with teachers, professionals, providers, media representatives and even families by using respectful terms. *You are more than a disability!*

RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE

VS.

NOT RESPECTFUL (WRONG) LANGUAGE

- Children with autism need help.
NOT: Autistic children need help.
- Jim needs assistance.
NOT: Those people need assistance.
- Peter has a cognitive disability.
NOT: Peter's retarded.
- Ann has a hearing disability.
NOT: Ann's deaf.
- Judy uses mobility aids.
NOT: Judy is crippled.

The
Americal Dream
for
All Individuals
with
Developmental Disabilities.

*Todd Decker is
Chairperson of
Area 15 Family
Care Council;
Indian River,
Martin,
Okeechobee,
and St. Lucie
Counties.*



I attended Indian River Community College in Vero Beach. My parents decided it was time to trade the snow and ice of Long Island, New York for the warmth and relaxation of Florida's Treasure Coast. It is here I fell in love with the exciting world of radio. Like all who fall in love, I had to follow my passion. In April of 2000, I received my certification from the Connecticut School of Broadcasting. At present, I am in the early stages of working to achieve my overall objective in life. Within the next four years, I plan to be President and C.E.O. of my own company, "Wheelchair Boy Disability Services."

Community Inclusion

... What Do I Do?

Individuals and their families need to develop a plan for the future that includes the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) if you qualify for services. In addition, everyone needs to expand the community resources that already exist and develop new resources. For individuals on the wait list, do not sit around and wait to receive APD services. The Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) is only one funding source.

State and Federal laws support the rights of children and adults (with and without disabilities) to participate in the community. Many roads have been opened in the last several years because family members have invested their time and energy to the importance of inclusion for everyone.

*People want
ordinary lives in the community.
Some people
may need a little more support
than usual to achieve that goal!*

*How fortunate the person
who has a friend to help them achieve
successful inclusion.*

Department of Education:

The Department of Education, offers special education classes and it is important these services be utilized for the benefit of a student. Families need to work with the school system. When a special education student becomes 14 years old, they should have a Transition Plan in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) to encourage the direction of the student through high school years and beyond.

Attend IEP meetings and know the teachers your child has during the day. Support the system and your child, as much as you can, to show them your commitment for your child's success. *Believe in your child's future!* <http://www.fldoe.org>

Department of Vocational Rehabilitation:

The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation works with the Department of Education on the transition plans for special education students while they are in school. A lot of emphasis has been placed on

employment and preparation for employment in the last couple of years. Make sure these goals are in your child's IEP. Statistics have shown the importance of these goals. After a child leaves the school system it can be much more difficult to establish an employment support system. Expect the professionals to meet this goal for your child, regardless of the disability.

The Department of Vocational Rehabilitation also provides services for adult individuals with developmental disabilities. They may provide assessment, training and job coaching. They are located in every community in Florida. Contact them directly to receive services. <http://www.rehabwork.org>

Social Security Administration (SSA):

Benefits for Social Security and Medicaid may be available for adults and children. It is important qualifications be reviewed. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly benefits could be used to help pay for some assistance or private services.

Employment is community inclusion and the accomplishment of being paid is a powerful tool. The vision of employment for individuals with disabilities often becomes clouded with fear and confusion. Educating individuals and their representatives about SSA work incentives (pages 14-15) has become a priority. Many people take a pay check for granted, yet employment and a pay check for individuals with developmental disabilities can change their lives. <http://www.ssa.gov>.

Socialization:

Non-Programs: Do not limit your socialization opportunities to "programs" for people who happen to have a disability. Being "A Part" of the community means having choices. If necessary, some parents volunteer temporarily as a mentor for success. Success can be achieved and is healthy and rewarding for everyone.

Programs: Special Olympics gives children and adults an opportunity to socialize and gain activity skills. Local community organizations or families often initiate programs for individuals with developmental disabilities. Many of these programs are started by a family member seeking social activities. These could transfer into inclusive opportunities.

For additional information, Ask your APD office for community resources to help you get connected (page 13) or call the Family Care Council hot line.

Social Capital

. . . What is it and why is it so important?

Increases in social contacts improve mental and physical health, prolong life and actually can lead to a less abusive life. With greater social opportunities, we will live healthier and happier lives, increase our community opportunities and be able to exercise choice and self-determination. Socialization with other people -- our families, friends, neighbors, social groups, and co-workers are opportunities everyone should have, including persons with a developmental disability.

Graduating from the School System often leaves people isolated and without social contacts.

Many individuals with developmental disabilities and their families have had the social environment of the school system for 21 years. Upon leaving the school system, there may not be an organized system for socialization and community. Individuals must make their own pathways for socialization, and community inclusion is a critical goal for success. The social ties and trust we develop with other people is known as SOCIAL CAPITAL. How much social capital do you have?

Community Inclusion is more than a Developmental Disability Program.

. . . It's inclusion in the community . . .

1. Organize neighborhood social gatherings
2. Attend town meetings and local sports events
3. Register to vote and be sure to vote
4. Participate in political campaigns
5. Volunteer your special skills to an organization
6. Donate blood
7. Start a community garden or plant a tree
8. Surprise a new neighbor by making a favorite dish - and include the recipe
9. Enjoy people and smile
10. Organize or participate in a sports league
11. Join a gardening or game club
12. Sing in a choir
13. Participate in a walkathon



Chris Ruf and his mom eat at Chick-Fil-A restaurant on a regular basis. The owner, Mr. Giella, was impressed with Chris and ASKED Chris if he wanted a job. Chris has been employed at Chick-Fil-A since October 2005. Chris is able to continue his volunteer work, which includes the Salvation Army and local food pantries.

Keep your mailing address current with the APD at all times.



Mary Houghland has added some SOCIAL CAPITAL to her life by regularly visiting the bar at her local Friday's restaurant where many other 24 year old young people hang out. Mary has developed several community acquaintances and is well known at Friday's as a regular. She looks forward to the people, lights and excitement. Mary would be missed if she was not there.