



New Horizons

Housing | nat Supports Independence



Judge: Universal Studios Discriminated Against Man In Power Chair

by Gabrielle Russon, Reprinted from The Orlando Sentinel/TNS | October 10, 2017

An administrative judge says an Orlando man was discriminated against after he could not use his motorized wheelchair to wait in line for rides at Universal Studios last year, court documents show. When reached for comment Monday, Javier Muniz, 33, said he was pleased with the judge's recommendation, which is not final. Muniz filed a complaint with the Florida Commission on Human Relations, which will consider the ruling by Judge Linzie Bogan.

"I still can't believe no one in my position would not go forward (with a complaint) when that happens," said Muniz, who started using a wheelchair three years ago because a condition took away his feeling from the waist down on his left side. "I know I'm not the only one."

A Universal Studios spokesman did not return a message for comment Monday. But in court documents, Marian Adams, a senior manager at the theme park, said the theme park bans motorized wheelchairs in lines for safety concerns because of the large number of people in close proximity to each other, she said, according to court documents. Only Hogwarts Express, the train that connects the two Universal theme parks, allows motorized wheelchairs, court documents said.

Judge Linzie Bogan said late last week that Universal violated the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992 and recommends the state commission issue a final order on the complaint.

According to the complaint, Muniz visited the park in July 2016 and refused to transfer from his motorized wheelchair, which has a custom seat and cushion, into one of Universal's manual wheelchairs. He was not allowed to ride several attractions, including Skull Island: Reign of Kong, court documents show. "It made me feel ... like I was nothing," Muniz said Monday.

In court documents, he testified, "Every single ride that I tried to enter, I was told power wheelchairs cannot be accommodated on the line because if they lose power, it could be a safety hazard." Universal gives patrons in manual wheelchairs unrestricted access to the rides, allowing them to use an alternative ramp, according to the park's policies that were part of the court documents. Muniz said he was not given that option.

However, Bogan wrote that "(Universal's) practice of directing such patrons to the exit ramp seems to be the practical equivalent of telling these patrons 'to go around to the back.'"

The ruling could potentially open the door for a civil lawsuit. Muniz said he filed the complaint without using an attorney and has not made a decision about his next steps. "I'm not asking Universal Studios to skip the lines," Muniz said. "I'm asking them to treat me like any other person."

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“My Two Cents”

By *Tim Doherty, Executive Director*



Well Christmas is right around the corner and for many of us, it revolves around the tasks of shopping for that special gift. Shopping for family and friends, can really get expensive, however many times giving doesn't require money. It can be as simple as making a phone call to our Mom or Dad or a friend, to just wish them a Merry Christmas and to say "how are you". Giving is really what Christmas is all about, and it is something that we can all do.

Recently, I hooked up with an old high school classmate, who is recently disabled and who uses a wheelchair full time. Prior to becoming disabled, Ed was a policeman, a building contractor and a private investigator. A man of many talents. Ed also has a love of animals and nature, and has chosen to use his Facebook and blog pages to advertise pet adoptions in this area. Ed will include photos of these animals on his postings, with a little description of each pet. Getting out the word is how Ed has managed to save many of these stray animals. Not only is Ed providing a great service to the local animal shelter, it is very satisfying for him knowing that he is contributing something back to society.

My other friend, Mike, who is not disabled, is always involved in some community activity. Over the Thanksgiving holiday, he organized our church in the delivery of turkey meals to over 170 local folks, replacing the Meals on Wheels that day. For years, he and his two boys would collect food donations to bring to the local shelter, and he has always taught his kids that it was better to give than to receive.

I once heard it said that the most precious thing that we possess is our time. Spending our time to comfort someone or just to talk with our friend, who may be down, is something that really costs us nothing, but can be so important to those who we comfort. Even not saying a word, at times, but just being there for that person, can mean so much to them, especially in their time of need. For Christians, Christmas commemorates the birth of Jesus, someone who cares very much for others.

So, when you spend your Christmas this year, take time to reach out to someone you haven't spoken to in a while, and let them know that you are interested in how they are doing. You never know, you might stumble upon a new friend, someone who you would be glad to know, and who would be glad to know you.

Have a very Merry Christmas.

From Norman's Desk



December is a time of celebration and gift giving. My gift to our readers is a short column so other news can have my space.

The Holiday Season is both a time for giving and saying thanks. Project Freedom has a lot of supporters, and we thank each of you for giving us your support throughout the year.

We have had another successful year with Freedom Villages being approved for West Windsor and Gibbsboro to bring 144 more apartments online by 2020. We also held two great fundraising events, and we have held many refreshing recreation trips and programs run by dedicated staff and resourceful volunteers. We thank all that participated. You make Project Freedom strong and productive.

Project Freedom is moving forward into our 34th year of advocating for people with disabilities exercising their right to live in the community.

This is the season for giving, and if you are so inclined to give to Project Freedom, it is not too late to become a 2017 Supporter! Your gift will be appreciated and acknowledged by yours truly.

Project Freedom is an AmazonSmile charity, and you may select us if you participate in that program as you buy gifts. Go to smile.amazon.com/ch/22-2532804 and Amazon donates to Project Freedom Inc.

Meanwhile, I hope all of readers have wonderful and joyous holidays, receive the gift of peace and love, and have the companionship of those dearest to you.

Norman A. Smith,
Follow me on Twitter @normansmith02
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Airbnb buys ‘Airbnb for disabled people’ startup Accomable in accessibility upgrade

Reprinted from TechCrunch Nov 16, 2017 by Ingrid Lunden@ingridlunden)

Airbnb, the accommodation and travel startup that is now valued at \$31 billion, is today announcing an acquisition that points to how it wants to address the travel needs of more kinds of customers. It has bought Accomable, a startup based out of London that focuses on travel listings that are disabled-friendly. Along with the announcement Airbnb is refreshing its own accessibility features as the first stage in how it hopes to develop them.

As part of the acquisition, Accomable will be winding down its business, co-founder and CEO Srin Madipalli said in an interview this week here in London, as the startup’s team begins work on building out both more specific features for the Airbnb platform, and a community of hosts who can accommodate disabled visitors — and in turn, to attract more of those looking to book disabled-friendly travel.



This will start with accommodation for those in wheelchairs first, he said, with an invitation being extended to Accomable’s existing hosts to list on Airbnb as part of the transition. Accomable had amassed listings for 1,100 properties in 60 countries with details about step-free access, other accessibility adaptations and with photos to show it all to would-be visitors.

Over time, the idea will be to create communities for travelers with other accessibility needs, and potentially move into areas that are aligned with Airbnb’s own expansion into Experiences once you get to your destination, which is another important area of travel where those needing special accessibility have been underserved.

“It’s something that has frustrated me from the start, that we weren’t able to do everything for everyone,” Madipalli said. “One of the challenges in an early startup is that you have constrained resources, but within Airbnb we can diversify.” And hopefully grow: he also added that one of Accomable’s biggest issues up to now has been that demand for places has far exceeded the supply of available listings.

Airbnb — which has booked accommodation for 260 million guests and currently features over four million listings — is coupling the news with some accessibility announcements of its own. While the company has offered the ability to search for whether a property is wheelchair accessible, the company now acknowledges that this wasn’t cutting it. “Guests weren’t getting the information they needed to find the right homes, nor the confidence that the home they selected would actually be accessible for them,” Airbnb notes in a blog post. Now, the company is updating and enhancing this with more detail, including whether there is step-free entry to rooms, and if entryways are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair. These search features are now live on the web version of Airbnb and will soon get added to its iOS and Android apps.

Financial terms of the Accomable acquisition are not being disclosed, after the startup raised less than \$500,000, mostly from angel investors. For now, Madipalli will be the only one who is relocating to San Francisco, with the rest of the small team continuing to work out of London.

Accomable was founded in 2015 by Madipalli and Martyn Sibley, who together previously had co-founded a magazine and online community called Disability Horizons. The two friends are avid travelers but found that it was a lot of work to organize trips: both have Spinal Muscular Atrophy and use wheelchairs. In the very crowded market of online resources out there for tourists of other stripes, they saw a gap: planning accommodation, travel and activities around accessibility needs should be as straightforward as planning for any other need, they thought. And thus Accomable was born. “The original idea we had was to solve a problem that Martyn and I specifically had,” Madipalli recalled. “We said to ourselves, ‘we can fix this problem with tech.’”

Continued on page 8



Robbinsville Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
4-Dec	Mon	Robbinsville Holiday Crafts	Prog. Time 6:30 -9:00 PM
7-Dec	Thu	Robbinsville Holiday Ornaments	Prog. Time 6:30 -9:00 PM
9-Dec	Sat	Robbinsville Holiday Party	Prog. Time 5:30 PM
11-Dec	Mon	Robbinsville Baking with Dana	Prog. Time 6:30 -9:00 PM
27-Dec	Wed	Robbinsville Holiday Games	Prog. Time 6:30 -9:00 PM



Hamilton Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
6-Dec	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
6-Dec	Wed	Hamilton Holiday Crafts	Prog. Time 5:00 -9:00 PM
13-Dec	Wed	Hamilton Holiday Games	Prog. Time 5:00 -8:00 PM
18-Dec	Mon	Hamilton Baking with Dana	Prog. Time 5:00 -8:00 PM
19-Dec	Tue	Hamilton Holiday Party	Prog. Time 4:00 -6:00 PM
26-Dec	Tue	Hamilton Holiday Games	Prog. Time 5:00 -7:00 PM



Lawrence Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
6-Dec	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 A
12-Dec	Tue	Lawrence Holiday Crafts	Prog. Time 3:00 - 5:00 PM
20-Dec	Wed	Lawrence Holiday Party	Prog. Time 4:00 -7:00 PM
28-Dec	Thu	Lawrence Holiday Games	Prog. Time 3:00 -5:00 PM



Hopewell Events

1-Dec	Fri	Mercer Home Health Hosting Pokeno	3:00 PM
5-Dec	Tue	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	1:15PM to 3:30 PM
8-Dec	Fri	PFI Tenant bus shopping trip to Quakerbridge Mall	10:00AM to 3:00 PM
13-Dec	Wed	Hopewell Tenant Holiday Dinner Party	4:00 PM
20-Dec	Wed	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	9:30AM to 11:30 AM



Toms River Events

20-Dec	Wed	Toms River Holiday Party	Prog. Time 3:00 -7:00 PM
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Woodstown Events

20-Dec	Wed	Woodstown Holiday Party	Prog. Time 4:00 -7:00 PM
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Westampton Events

19-Dec	Tue	Westampton Holiday Party	Prog. Time 5:00 -7:30 PM
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Madipalli (pictured right, scuba diving, on one of his trips) said that he and Sibley took their inspiration from Airbnb in the early days, not only in shaping their ambition to build a new travel platform from the ground up, but in how to go about doing it.

“I read about Airbnb’s founders staying with hosts in NYC,” he said in reference to how Airbnb’s early inventory came out of Brian Chesky, Joe Gebbia and Nathan Blecharczyk travelling and sourcing it themselves, since they were breaking new ground by building a network of spare rooms in private homes as a hotel alternative. And so, this is what he did, too. “For months, I travelled around Europe with my care assistant, sourcing hosts in different cities using Twitter and Facebook, taking pictures and working out what makes a accessible listing,” he recalled. (Sibley left Accomable on friendly terms in 2016.)



The idea started small but gained more ground after Accomable raised a seed round of £300,000 last year from unnamed angel investors from the technology and hospitality sectors. (Its previous funding had only been a £20,000 grant from the Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University, where Madipalli had received an MBA, just one of a string of accomplishments: he also trained and worked as a lawyer, and before that got an undergraduate degree in genetics from Kings College in London.) Accomable’s small team (seven at the time of the acquisition; five are coming to Airbnb) all either also have accessibility needs or are closely connected to people who do, Madipalli said. The acquisition and what it will add to Airbnb underscores an interesting turn in how the company has been building its profile up to now.

Airbnb’s 4 million listings in private homes puts it higher than the top four hotel chains combined in terms of room count. As it has grown, the bulk of its battles have largely been regulatory: specifically whether it’s being taxed and playing on the same level playing field as the hotels it’s aiming to disrupt and compete with.

It has also been fending off some criticism from observers that its growth is slowing in some markets. Specifically, it has slowed down in the US, UK, France and Germany, according to a recent survey from Morgan Stanley, published to demonstrate that its impact on hotels won’t be as strong as originally projected.

A source close to the company confirms that Airbnb has remained profitable and broke \$1 billion in revenue in the last quarter with growth at 50 percent and projected to reach 60 percent by the end of this year.

Airbnb has sought to match the criticism and regulatory pushes with attempts to demonstrate its positive impact on local economies. The shift to looking at accessibility is, in a way, in line with that. The company has already had a policy barring discrimination against those with disabilities, but now admits that “it’s clear that we can do more to effectively serve people with disabilities.” In addition to the Accomable acquisition, Airbnb says it now has a dedicated team of engineers working on accessibility and has audited its platform to figure out what needs to be improved. They’ve focused on areas like color contrast and labels on icons for those who have visual impairments.

2018 Club Freedom Memberships Due



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Limitation: Please check appropriate

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- Ambulatory with assistance
- Non-ambulatory
- Wear braces
- Visually impaired
- Hearing impaired
- Allergies (list) _____
- Type of Disability (optional) _____

Please check a category:	Annual Fee
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<input type="checkbox"/> Companion Membership (i.e. spouse, children, PCA, etc).....	\$6
<input type="checkbox"/> To Sponsor an individual.....	\$12
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation.....	\$_____

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In order to fully participate in recreation you must join Club Freedom
Any questions, please contact Norman Smith 609-448-2998 or email: projectfreedom1@aol.com

PF Lawrence Celebrates It's Renewed Gazebo With Luncheon



On October 13th, Project Freedom at Lawrence held a flea market and free lunch for tenants.

A lovely new wheelchair accessible picnic table was unveiled, which was donated in memory of a longtime tenant, Ms. Carol Coveney. Also added was a new wheelchair accessible barbecue grill for the use of the tenants.

The Gazebo, with all existing tables and benches, was also renewed to match the new table. The Lawrence maintenance men spent hours meticulously sanding and re-staining the gazebo to make it look like new!

Great job, guys!



This Is The Best Way to Wash Your Produce

Reprinted from Grandparents.com article by Jessica Dysart

You already know washing your produce is important. But it turns out that a quick rinse under tap water isn't the best way to get rid of pesticides lurking in your fruits and vegetables.

Scientists have found that **baking soda** was the most effective at removing pesticides from the surfaces of apples.

In a new study published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, researchers tested tap water, bleach, and a baking soda soak on apples after applying pesticides to the surface of the fruit. A 15-minute baking soda soak removed almost all of the chemicals, though some were absorbed through the skin. While neither pesticide used is currently associated with any long-term health effects when consumed at low doses, a baking soda soak is great for reducing your intake of these chemicals.

Note: the FDA recommends just using water for washing produce. Soft fruits like berries should not be soaked, so save this method for hard-surfaced produce like apples.

To make a baking soda soak, combine a few tablespoons of baking soda and 2-3 cups of water in a clean mixing bowl. Soak produce for 15 minutes in the solution.



December General Recreation

Club Freedom Events Highlighted

2-Dec	Sat	Indoor Dirt Car Racing	Bus Leaves PFR 4:00 P
4-Dec	Mon	Day Program	Prog. Time 10 AM-3 PM
5-Dec	Tue	Holiday Lights - PA 5 Consumers Needed	Bus Leaves PFR 4:30 PM
7-Dec	Thu	Mall Trip Moorestown 5 People Needed	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 A
10-Dec	Sun	Day Program Holiday Trip	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 A
11-Dec	Mon	No Day Program	
13-Dec	Wed	Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 A
14-Dec	Thu	Holiday Concert at Lawrence	Bus Leaves PFR 5:30 PM
18-Dec	Mon	No Day Program	
22-Dec	Fri	PF Offices Closed Happy Holidays!	
1-Jan	Mon	PF Offices Closed	

**Lawrence Community
Band
Holiday Concert
Dec 14, 2017 @ 7 PM
At Lawrence PFI**

CALL 448-2998 FOR BUS PICKUP

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- Dec. 7
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- Dec. 10
Ronnie Lloyd**
- Dec. 11
Mary Edmondson**
- Dec. 12
Joyce Reed**
- Dec. 23
Mike Willis**



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GAMES



**Happy
Holidays!**



MOVIES



TRIPS

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Mondays from
10:30 am–2:30 pm
Call 977-1234 if interested**

**ARTS &
CRAFTS**



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