

New Horizons

Housing | nat Supports Independence

Chicago Tribune Wins 2017 Disability Reporting Award

Posted on **October 20, 2017**¹¹ by ¹²

A Chicago Tribune investigation into the mistreatment of disabled adults in Illinois group homes won the top honor in the 2017 Katherine Schneider Journalism Award for Excellence in Reporting on Disability, the only journalism awards competition devoted exclusively to disability reporting.

In "**Suffering in Secret**"¹³, Tribune reporters Michael J. Berens and Patricia Callahan identified more than 1,300 cases of documented harm since July 2011 in Illinois' taxpayer-funded group homes and their day programs. The reporters uncovered at least 42 deaths linked to abuse or neglect in group homes or their day programs and uncovered state records of residents fatally choking on improperly prepared food, succumbing to untreated bed sores and languishing in pain from undiagnosed ailments.

Second place went to the Brian M. Rosenthal of the Houston Chronicle. Third place was awarded to Mona Yeh, Sonya Green and Yuko Kodama for reports aired on Seattle-Tacoma public radio station 91.3 KBCS, and honorable mention went to Belo Cipriani of The Bay Area Reporter.

"PBS NewsHour" anchor Judy Woodruff, who served as a judge, noted that the Chicago Tribune's investigation had real consequences in Illinois, where state officials vowed increased transparency and oversight of taxpayer-funded group homes and legislators are considering laws to force reforms. The license of one group home provider highlighted in the series was revoked, and residents were moved to other facilities. "The amount of time that went into this project and what the reporters were able to uncover just blew me away," Woodruff said.

The three-part series was a finalist for the 2017 Pulitzer Prize in Investigative Reporting as well as the winner of the Worth Bingham Prize for Investigative Journalism and an Investigative Reporters and Editors Award in 2016.

Berens and Callahan will accept the first-place award and a \$5,000 cash prize Nov. 27 at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, where they also will deliver a public talk on their work. Their appearance, which is part of the school's "Must See Mondays" lecture series, will be at 7 p.m. in the school's First Amendment Forum. It is free of charge and open to the public, and sign language interpreting and captioning services will be provided.

The second place Schneider award and a \$1,500 prize were awarded to Rosenthal of the Houston Chronicle for an investigation that revealed how Texas officials systematically denied special education services to thousands of children. The seven-part series, "**Denied**"¹⁴, found that Texas placed a cap on how many children could receive special education services, saving billions of dollars but denying services to children with disabilities ranging from epilepsy and blindness to autism and attention deficit disorder.

Judges said they were shocked by Rosenthal's revelations. The state's actions, they said, showed a complete disregard for children with disabilities and their families.

Third place and a \$500 prize went to Yeh, Green and Kodama for two radio pieces chronicling the experiences of one wheelchair user trying to navigate public transportation in Seattle. "**Dorian Wants Transit Policy Toward Disabled Persons to Change**"¹⁵, aired on the Seattle-Tacoma public radio station 91.3 KBCS and was supported by the Association of Independents in Radio.

Cipriani, who is blind, received an honorable mention and a \$250 prize for a series, "**Seeing in the Dark**", published in the Bay Area Reporter. Cipriani writes about the disabled community in the Bay Area, challenging stereotypes about disability ranging from sex to parenting.

Judge Tony Coelho, a former six-term U.S. congressman from California and the primary sponsor of the Americans With Disabilities Act, said Cipriani is an important voice and one of a growing number of people with disabilities who are "writing about the everyday lives of people with disabilities." Too often, he said, reporting on disabilities is "about us" rather than "by us."

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“My Two Cents”

By *Tim Doherty, Executive Director*



So, as we start the new year (2018) it has been over two years since the New Jersey Supreme Court took the power of making decisions regarding affordable housing, out of the hands of the COAH Board, and into the respective courts of jurisdiction. So, the question to be asked and answered is has this been a better alternative moving us forward, or has it just delayed and set the affordable housing issue back to the drawing board. My answer to that is that some progress has been made although it has taken a lot of time to get where we are right now.

So, a little history is in order to set the stage. Sometime in 2008, the COAH board had set out to establish its third round of rules for affordable housing. This had been done twice before, ergo first round and second round. The third round rules passed however were challenged in the courts and after several years, portions of those rules were rejected, and a portion was upheld. COAH then attempted again to revise their rules and after several false starts, a new set was proposed by the administration, who was under the judicial gun to make a decision. Finally, the COAH Board did vote to turn down those proposed rules, in spite of the courts pressure, which brought the issue before the NJ Supreme Court. That Court decided that COAH, now was defunct and not able to operate, so that all issues of affordable housing would have to be solved within the court of jurisdiction for that town. As a result, most towns filed their declaration of judgement in court, which has given them immunity from a builders lawsuit until their cases could be heard.

So, that is what has been going on for the past two years, with towns having to submit their new COAH plans which now are to go to the year 2025. (2015 to 2025 – 10 years). Some towns have combined their efforts to fight these new requirements, while others have worked to settle. Overall, the majority of towns have worked to settle these lawsuits by submitting their new affordable housing plans. As a result, Project Freedom has gotten called into some of these towns for new future projects. One of those new towns is Robbinsville, coincidently where Project Freedom built it's very first housing project. Another town is Hamilton, again where we also have a presence. Both towns recognize the demand for barrier free housing, and have been supporters of our disabled clients.

This certainly is gratifying to know that these two towns think that much of Project Freedom to include us in their new housing plans for the future. This is also a result of having the issue of affordable housing finally being settled within the structure of the court system. In the past, when the Towns would come before COAH, they could easily delay their responses and would take months if not years to address what should have been settled months earlier. And since COAH had no real police power, there was basically nothing that COAH could do to make them comply.





From Norman's Desk

Readers of my column know that I often use this space to feature articles by others on issues affecting people with disabilities. This recent article from [The Nation](#) captures last year's fight against Medicaid cuts that were "buried" in the attempted repeal of the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare").

Love it or hate it, the repeal of Obamacare without careful and honest thought can be devastating to people with disabilities. The following article describes how members of ADAPT led last year's fight with their bodies.

Norman A. Smith, Associate Executive Director - ProjectFreedom1@aol.com

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***'If We Lose Our Health Care, We Will Begin to Die'
Disability activists are at the forefront of direct action against Trump.***

By Zoë Carpenter, [The Nation](#), January 10, 2018

One morning last June, as Senate Republicans worked feverishly to gut the Affordable Care Act, about 60 people, many of them in wheelchairs, entered the Russell Senate Office Building by separate doors so as not to attract attention from the Capitol Police. They converged on the office of Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell and proceeded to raise hell.

"No cuts to Medicaid! Save our liberty!" the protesters chanted; some got out of their wheelchairs and lay down on the floor. The day's news reports were filled with shocking pictures of police officers carrying away disabled activists, some of them handcuffed with zip ties.

Organized by the disability-rights group [ADAPT](#), the "die-in" at McConnell's office, as well as dozens of similar actions throughout the spring and summer at congressional offices from Fairbanks, Alaska, to Orlando, Florida, pulled back the curtain on the GOP's plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Deep cuts to Medicaid buried in the legislation would have been particularly devastating to disabled Americans, since the program helps many pay for at-home services, thus keeping them out of institutions. "If we lose our health care, people with disabilities in particular will begin to die, because we won't have access to doctors and to the services and supports that keep us alive and independent," explained Anita Cameron, a 31-year ADAPT veteran and one of the 43 people arrested at McConnell's office.

ADAPT's history of activism reaches back to the 1970s and is rooted in the community's efforts to escape nursing homes and live freely in the wider world. Using confrontational, nonviolent tactics inspired by the civil-rights movement, the group focused initially on access to public transit. In the summer of 1978, disability activists in Denver surrounded and "seized" two city buses—few of which had wheelchair lifts at the time—during the morning rush hour, then slept on the pavement overnight, preventing the buses from moving for two days.

Other early actions included smashing up curbs with sledgehammers in an effort to secure ramps at crosswalks, as well as a demonstration in Washington, DC, where activists abandoned their wheelchairs to crawl up the Capitol steps. That action led to one of the group's major victories: the Americans With Disabilities Act, enacted in 1990.

"We have been written off politically as a group of folks who can't get anything done and aren't really important to the political discourse," said longtime organizer Bruce Darling, who worked out the logistics for the takeover of McConnell's office. ADAPT's role in turning the tide of public opinion decisively against the GOP's plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act last year should dispel that notion. And you can count on ADAPT to be ready the next time legislators take aim at health care. "We are certainly prepared to fight for as long as it takes, and I don't see this ending anytime soon," promised Cameron, who by her own count has been arrested more than 130 times. "When they say 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'—we want that."

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New Research Finds Animals May Help Kids On The Spectrum

Reprinted from DisabilityScoop January 19, 2018 by Rita Giordano, Philly.com/TNS |

PHILADELPHIA — Sabrina Opstbaum wasn't expecting miracles when she started taking her daughter Reegan to the Barn at Spring Brook Farm, an animal-assisted intervention program for children with special needs in West Chester. Like many kids on the autism spectrum, Reegan didn't seem to connect with people, but she always enjoyed the company of animals.

After two years of weekly visits and summer camp with Annabelle the goat, Sugar the sheep, Dreamer the miniature horse, and their other barnyard cohorts, Reegan, now 8, is in many ways a changed little girl.

"She's become less aggressive," Opstbaum said. "She's in a calm mood when she's there, and it even carries over into school the next day, sometimes two days after. She's just more calm. And happy.

What made the difference?

"I honestly think it's the fact that the animals don't expect anything from her," Opstbaum said. "Their calm transfers over to her. With people, we're always placing demands. With animals, they're not asking for anything. It's just, 'Be with me.'"



A growing body of research has uncovered evidence that animal-assisted interventions (AAI) may help improve the lives of people with autism by addressing some of the disorder's more difficult symptoms.

Among the studies' key findings are increased social interaction and decreased anxiety — classic autism earmarks that increase kids' isolation, often make them targets of bullies, and limit communication even with those who love them most.

Page Walker Buck, an associate professor of social work at West Chester University, has been studying families whose children go to the Barn at Spring Brook Farm for about a year. Some parents, she knows, turn to AAI in frustration, even desperation. If an animal program appears to result in positive change, the parents get what Buck calls "extended benefits." Namely, hope.

"Hope helps family functioning," Buck said, "because hope mitigates stress."

'Taking the field more seriously'

For decades, there has been case studies and research attesting to the remarkable outcomes of animal therapy programs. But much of it was dismissed as merely anecdotal or lacking basis in serious scientific study methods.

Some parents of children with autism and other disabilities have spent substantial sums to have their children swim with dolphins, lured by the suggestion of wondrous results.

Newer studies have cast doubt on the lasting value of these therapies.

"The quality of the research has improved enormously, and the funding agencies are starting to take the field more seriously as a result," said James A. Serpell, a professor of animal welfare with the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine.

Recently, the National Institutes of Health, the nation's largest public funder of health research, and the Waltham Centre for Pet Nutrition, a division of Mars Inc., agreed to a five-year extension of the research partnership they started 10 years ago into the study of human-animal interaction, a growing field known as anthrozoology.

That partnership has yielded a wide range of research, including studies that suggest animal interactions may have beneficial impacts on children on the autism spectrum and people with other disabilities.

"It's too early to make any broad pronouncements, but it's certainly promising, and we're getting beyond the threshold of 'do no harm' to maybe if there are benefits, being able to quantify them," said James A. Griffin, NIH childhood development and behavior deputy branch chief.

Temple Grandin, a renowned animal behavior expert who is herself on the autism spectrum, thinks it makes sense that animals and people with autism may have an affinity. The professor of animal science at Colorado State University said animals, like some people on the spectrum, tend to be visual thinkers.

"Animals don't think in words," she said.

The most commonly studied interventions involve horses or dogs, but some of the most intriguing AAI research involves a far more unassuming creature: the humble guinea pig.

Continued on page 8



Robbinsville Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
4-Feb	Sun	Super Bowl Party - \$5:00 to Eat!	Doors Open at 5:30 pm
10-Feb	Sat	Valentine Cookies & Cards	Prog. Time 1:00 -3:00 PM
12-Feb	Mon	Chinese Crafts	Prog. Time 5:30 -8:30 PM
21-Feb	Wed	Valentine Games	Prog. Time 6:30 -8:30 PM
27-Feb	Tue	Movies	Prog. Time 6:00 -9:00 PM



Hamilton Happenings

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
7-Feb	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
7-Feb	Wed	Valentine Crafts - Pillows & Cards	Prog. Time 5:00 -8:00 PM
13-Feb	Tue	Hamilton Mardi Gras	Prog. Time 4:00 -7:00 PM
16-Feb	Fri	Valentine Games	Prog. Time 6:30 -8:30 PM
24-Feb	Sat	Valentine Games	Prog. Time 1:00 -3:00 PM
28-Feb	Wed	Board Games	Prog. Time 5:00 -8:00 PM



Tina and Tom enjoy the craft program





Lawrence Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
6-Feb	Tue	Valentine Cookies and Cards	Prog. Time 3:00 -6:00 PM
7-Feb	Wed	Hamilton/Lawrence Shopping	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
13-Feb	Tue	Massages	Must sign up at office
15-Feb	Thu	Chinese New Year Crafts	Prog. Time 5:00 -8:00 PM
21-Feb	Wed	Active Day Bingo	3:00 PM
22-Feb	Thu	Games	Prog. Time 4:00 -6:00 PM
28 -Feb	Wed	Nutrition	7:00 PM



Hopewell Events

DATE	DAY	PROGRAM (in Community Room)	TIME
6-Feb	Tue	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	1:15 PM to 3:15 PM
8-Feb	Thur	St. Gregory the Great Hosting Free New Clothing Give a way to tenants	11:00 AM to 3:00 PM
9-Feb	Fri	Mercer Home Health Hosting Pokeno	3:00 PM to 4:00 PM
15-Feb	Thu	Active Day of Hamilton Hosting Games	3:00 PM to 4:00 PM
21-Feb	Wed	Heart to Hearts Chair Massage	9:30 AM to 11:30 AM



Chicago Tribune Wins 2017 Disability Reporting Award

In addition to Coelho and Woodruff, the judges for this year's contest were Pulitzer Prize-winning former Washington Post reporter Leon Dash, now Swanlund Chair Professor of Journalism at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Jennifer Longdon, a Phoenix-based writer, speaker, advocate and policy adviser on issues related to disability.

The Schneider Award was established in 2013 with the support of Schneider, a retired clinical psychologist who has been blind since birth and who also supports the national Schneider Family Book Awards. The reporting contest is administered by the National Center on Disability and Journalism at the Cronkite School.

Since 2013, the top Schneider Awards have gone to Ryan Gabrielson of California Watch, Dan Barry of The New York Times, Heather Vogell of ProPublica and Chris Serres of the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

This entry was posted in contest archive¹⁷, featured¹⁸. Bookmark the permalink¹¹.

About NCDJ

People with disabilities make up at least 19 percent of the U.S. population or 54.4 million people. The goal of the NCDJ is to provide support and guidance for journalists as they cover people with disabilities.

New Research Finds Animals May Help Kids On The Spectrum

In one study, Australian schoolchildren on the spectrum exhibited more social behaviors — talking to people, looking at their faces, even touching them — when they got to interact with guinea pigs rather than just toys. They also laughed and smiled more — behaviors seen as precursors to social interaction.

Another Australian study showed a positive physiological response to the animals that could extend to easier connections with humans. For the study, children with autism and neurotypical kids wore wristbands that monitored their neurological arousal levels while performing certain routine classroom activities together, including handling guinea pigs.

Both sets of children said they were happy playing with the guinea pigs, but, unlike the neurotypical kids, anxiety levels in the children with autism dropped. In other words, the animals seemed to make them calmer. The researchers suggested that the animals may serve as “social buffers” for children with autism, possibly facilitating interaction with other children just by being there.

“Some of the children described the guinea pigs as their friends, even best friends,” said Marguerite E. O’Haire, lead researcher for both studies. “Many children would sit near the cage when stressed or just hang out there to watch them.” O’Haire, an assistant professor of human/animal interaction at Purdue University’s College of Veterinary Medicine, said the results of studies such as hers show promise for some people on the autism spectrum. However, she said, much more study is needed.

“One of the key areas for future research on this topic,” O’Haire said, “is to understand for whom it will work and for whom it might not so we can better direct resources and tailor programming.”

An unexpected friendship

A small posse of baby goats spills out of a barn door, scampering and frolicking in a fenced paddock under an early evening sky. Two little boys are in hot pursuit, laughing, giggling.

“Help me, Trevor! I can’t get him!” calls out Nicholas Opstbaum, 9, trying to head off one of the animals. Trevor Walsh, also 9, grins broadly as he runs to catch up.

Trevor is on the autism spectrum. Nicholas is not. But Nicholas is the kind of person Trevor had never before known. He is Trevor’s friend.

“Trevor never had that in a peer, not even in school,” said his mother Laurie Beatty-Walsh. “Before the Barn, he wasn’t able to respond to the offer of friendship.”

Trevor’s parents first brought him to the Barn because he was terrified of dogs. They thought the program might help. At first he wanted no part of the animals, but with the staff’s help, that gradually changed.

Then Trevor and Nicholas started to get acquainted, too. Nicholas attends the program with Reegan, his younger sister who is on the spectrum.

Activities with the animals have become the boys’ social bridge. Now they also play together every week at the Walshes’ home.

Labeled nonverbal because he would only repeat what other people said or what he heard on television, Trevor now uses his own words with Nicholas. They make each other laugh; they get each other’s senses of humor. And Trevor has begun to show interest in other people, too.

“It’s created so much improvement in his life and my family’s life,” Beatty-Walsh said.

It has something to do with the animals, she thinks. “They are calming, and they’re a motivator,” she said.

In the spring, Trevor is going to help raise a calf through 4-H, the nonprofit youth organization. Nicholas wants to do it, too, Beatty-Walsh said.

After all, they’re friends.

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Any questions, please contact Norman Smith 609-448-2998 or email: projectfreedom1@aol.com

White Chocolate Raspberry Cheesecake

Prep-1 hr /Cook –1 hr / Ready in 10 hrs

Recipe By:Cindy Catudal Shank

"This makes an excellent cheesecake, similar to one you would get in a restaurant. Great for special occasions! Garnish with white chocolate curls if desired."



Ingredients

- 1 cup chocolate cookie crumbs
- 3 tablespoons white sugar
- 1/4 cup butter, melted
- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen raspberries
- 2 tablespoons white sugar
- 2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 cups white chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup half-and-half cream
- 3 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

In a medium bowl, mix together cookie crumbs, 3 tablespoons sugar, and melted butter. Press mixture into the bottom of a 9 inch springform pan.

In a saucepan, combine raspberries, 2 tablespoons sugar, cornstarch, and water. Bring to boil, and continue boiling 5 minutes, or until sauce is thick. Strain sauce through a mesh strainer to remove seeds.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). In a metal bowl over a pan of simmering water, melt white chocolate chips with half-and-half, stirring occasionally until smooth.

In a large bowl, mix together cream cheese and 1/2 cup sugar until smooth. Beat in eggs one at a time. Blend in vanilla and melted white chocolate. Pour half of batter over crust. Spoon 3 tablespoons raspberry sauce over batter. Pour remaining cheesecake batter into pan, and again spoon 3 tablespoons raspberry sauce over the top. Swirl batter with the tip of a knife to create a marbled effect.

Bake for 55 to 60 minutes, or until filling is set. Cool, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate for 8 hours before removing from pan. Serve with remaining raspberry sauce.

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DID YOU KNOW???

In 1866, a man named Daniel Chase invented a machine that could use food dye to print the messages on candy made by his brother's company, Necco.

FEBRUARY

General Recreation

Club Freedom Events Highlighted

5-Feb	Mon	Day Program	Prog. Time 10 AM-3 PM
8-Feb	Thu	Mall Trip Quakerbridge 4 People Needed	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
12-Feb	Mon	Day Program	Prog. Time 10 AM-3 PM
13-Feb	Tue	Movies—Hamilton AMC 24	Bus Leaves PFR 10:00 AM
14-Feb	Wed	Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
15-Feb	Thu	Mall Trip Moorestown 5 People Needed	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
19-Feb	Mon	Presidents' Day - PF Offices CLOSED	
21-Feb	Wed	Parx Casino - Philadelphia - 5 Needed	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
22-Feb	Thu	Columbus Indoor Farmers Market	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM
26-Feb	Mon	Day Program	Prog. Time 10 AM-3 PM
28-Feb	Wed	Grocery Shopping - Shop Rite	Bus Leaves PFR 9:30 AM



Feb. 3
Monique Armstrong
Jason Cohen

Feb. 10
Brooklyn ?

Feb. 12
Beverly Kline

Feb 14
Mollie Robertson

Feb. 24
Esther Gonzalez

Valentine's Day

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid.
 The remaining letters spell a popular Valentine's Day item.

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P I H S D N E I R F D I P U C A L
V D H S U R C A C F B A L E N D O
N Y N T I A E A S O L C T O Y M V
S R N E N S N L Y E H O I E R I E
T L E D I D S F A O N T W S A R B
R E Y S L R R E C T C T L E U E I
A W S E R I F O N A I A I C R R R
E E S E E E L L R D S O O M B S D
H J C N S A V T R O N U N T E D S
T G D N T O T O P I P O A S F N A
E N Y E A A R O L L G C F E H I T
E I S D U M R B E L O V E D B I G
W L O D R P O A F F E C T I O N P
S R E M A L F R R E N T R A P A R
E A Y C N A F O R E V E R L I K E
R D R O T I U S D N O J T O V E D
  
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ADMIRER	COUPLE	FLOWERS	LOVERS
ADORE	CRUSH	FONDNESS	PARTNER
AFFECTION	CUPID	FOREVER	PROPOSAL
ATTRACTION	DARLING	FRIENDSHIP	RELATIONSHIP
BEAU	DATE	GIFT	RESTAURANT
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ies