



Welcome to the first UCP Affiliate e-Newsletter, a weekly publication for and about UCP affiliates. Our mission is to provide news and information important to the UCP community.

To share news from your affiliate, please contact Jim Baker at (202) 973-7114 or jbaker@ucp.org.

UCP of Metro Dallas Consumer Petitions for Airline Accessibility

(May 11 - Coppell, TX) - Rasha Kavar, a UCP of Metropolitan Dallas consumer, recently started a petition for airline accessibility. Rasha, a third grader with cerebral palsy, flew to visit her grandparents and was unable to use the cramped aircraft restroom. Frustrated and angry, she set out to tell her story.

Airline accessibility is regulated by the Department of Transportation and the Air Carrier Access Act of 1986. The law states that only two-aisle aircraft must have an accessible restroom. However, the law does not address smaller single-aisle aircraft. Just boarding a small plane can be next to impossible for a person with a disability using a wheelchair or scooter. Other omissions in the law include a complete set of regulations for accessibility in airport terminals.

Though fighting the powerful airline industry will be difficult, Rasha is determined to make a difference. While not specifically advocating for a change in the law, UCP supports Rasha's efforts to raise awareness of the accessibility challenges faced by millions of Americans every day.

Thanks to UCP affiliate support over the past week, Rasha's Web site was one of the 25 most popular petitions on PetitionOnline.com.

[Read More About Rasha and Sign Her Petition...](#)



UCP of NYC Holds Third Annual "Women Who Care" Luncheon



(May 6, 2004 - New York, NY) - Nearly 500 women turned out to help raise \$300,000 at the third annual UCP of New York City "Women Who Care" Luncheon.

Among the celebrity guests and award presenters were Diane Sawyer, Susan Lucci, Helen Gurley Brown, Dr. Ruth Westheimer, Dayle Haddon, Deborah Roberts, Kathryn Chenault, Law & Order's Epatha Merkerson, Miss U.S.A. Shandi Finnessey, Sports Illustrated model Audrey Quock of New York Model Management and Donna Hanover, who was the event's emcee.

Women Who Care honorees were Anne Sweeney, President, Disney-ABC Television and Co-Chairman, Media Networks, The Walt Disney Company; Regina Kulik Scully, Founder & CEO, RPR Marketing Communications & CareerPeaks Foundation and Sandra Parks, Chairman & Creative Director, Daily Blossom. Susan Kaskel received the Leulla Bennack Volunteer Award; Willie Mae Goodman was presented with the Karen Hansen Caregiver Award.

Co-chaired by National UCP Board of Trustee member Loreen Arbus, the event drew wide support from the UCP family. Trustees Anne Rader and Karen Holmes Ward also attended with David Bennett, UCP National Vice President of Development.

UCP of Michigan Warns of Urban Sprawl Impact

(May 3 - Lansing, MI) - Full funding for public transportation and expansion of affordable housing in urban areas were two solutions to urban sprawl outlined by United Cerebral Palsy of Michigan and the Michigan Land Use Institute at the "Everyone Travels" conference on transportation in Lansing last week.

The two non-profit advocacy organizations partnered to highlight 10 solutions to combat urban sprawl. Their "best of" list includes regional development planning, reinvestment in decaying urban communities, increased transportation choices, and support of agriculture production areas. UCP focused on ways sprawl negatively affects the lives of people with disabilities, a connection that has not garnered enough attention in the past.

"While sprawl wears down anyone's sense of community, it can destroy it for people with disabilities," says Linda Potter, UCP of Michigan executive director. "With few nearby places to go and no good way to get there, the world outside can be un-navigable and unavailable. Full participation in our community is impossible if we can't get to it or around it."

News and Notes...

Public Policy Collaboration News

New issues of [Capitol Insider](#) and [Washington Watch](#) are available.

Featured Articles

THE 'BEST GIFT'

Together with her daughter

By Lauren Terrazzano

Newsday - May 9, 2004

[A consumer's special Mother's Day - made possible, in part, by UCP of Greater Suffolk.](#)

News Round-Up

A federal appeals court last month said that Pennsylvania is committing a “gross injustice” by housing hundreds of mentally ill people at a state psychiatric hospital when they could get better treatment in less restrictive settings, such as group homes. Initiated by three Norristown State patients, the class action lawsuit claimed that continued institutionalization of people well enough to be treated elsewhere amounted to segregation and violated anti-discrimination provision of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Disability Law Project backed the lawsuit.

On May 1, Stanley J. Mordarsky, a 55-year-old man with cerebral palsy, was thrown from a roller coaster and killed at Six Flags in Agawam, MA. Last week the Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Safety ordered the shutdown of all amusement rides using “t-bar” hydraulic restraints. A preliminary report by the state placed partial blame on Mordarsky for not informing Six Flags employees of his disability, although he was a season-ticket holder and used a scooter for mobility.

Louisiana's health department faces \$314 million in proposed cuts for the 2004-2005 fiscal year, which will lead to severe cuts in services for the poor, disabled and uninsured. Though having made health care a priority in her campaign for office, Governor Kathleen Blanco (D) is struggling to fill a \$500 million hole in next years \$17 billion budget proposal.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) last month fined Delta Airlines a record \$1.35 million for refusing to provide passengers wheelchair services. The DOT allowed Delta to spend the fine on improving services for people with disabilities.

Florida third-graders with disabilities fail the state's standardized test at twice the rate of their peers. More than 8,300 students flunked the test for the second year in a row; over half of those have some kind of physical or learning disability.

A Suffolk, Virginia, based manufacturing company that employed 158 people with disabilities will close in June. The struggling company was operated by Tidewater, a non-profit whose aim was to build independence and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The plant made plastic packets for condiments, eating utensils and napkins, but lost business to overseas competitors in recent years.

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