

UCPeople

The e-Newsletter for UCP Affiliates

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United Cerebral Palsy has set-up two numbers for UCP of Greater New Orleans and UCP of Mobile. These numbers can be used to reach staff at either affiliate in the likelihood Hurricane Ivan impacts affiliate operations:

***UCP of Greater New Orleans: 1-800-872-5827 ext.7115
UCP of Mobile: 1-800-872-5827 ext.7151***

Public Television Broadcasts "Freedom Machines"

"Freedom Machines," a compelling new documentary about Americans with disabilities and the transformative power of technology will premier nationwide on Public Television on Tuesday, September 14th. The film was selected as a Fall Special by POV, PBS's award-winning non-fiction series, and is scheduled to appear on nearly 90% of public stations nationwide between 9-11pm beginning Tuesday.

Washington, D.C., public television station WETA and Maryland Public Television have decided to air the program in a 1am time-slot, denying the large metropolitan population that includes federal lawmakers easy access to this important program.

To get more information or to find out when "Freedom Machines" is airing in your region, visit <http://www.pbs.org> or <http://www.freedommachines.com>.

Tom O'Donnell Named Chairman of the UCP Board of Trustees

By Jim Baker

(September 11 - Washington, DC) - The United Cerebral Palsy Board of Trustees elected Tom O'Donnell as Chairman on Saturday, September 11.

The election of Tom O'Donnell as Chairman followed the resignation of Anita Porco from the Board of Trustees, who said she will remain an advocate for United Cerebral Palsy.

"I am so grateful to the affiliates and to the Board of Trustees for giving me the opportunity to lead," said outgoing Chair, Anita Porco. "As I leave this position, I believe that UCP has strong leadership and visionary direction,



and it is my desire to explore other opportunities to serve UCP that might conflict with my continued service on the board."

Following Ms. Porco's announcement, Vice-Chairman Duncan Wyeth nominated Tom O'Donnell to serve as Chairman. Mr. O'Donnell's nomination was seconded by Trustee and former Chairman, Jim Stearns.

Tom O'Donnell has been an advocate for people with disabilities for three decades. As a staff attorney assigned to public policy issues for the National Center for Law and the Handicapped in the 1970's, O'Donnell worked to reinforce the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, a law that later evolved into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

As an attorney with Legal Aid of Western Missouri, he enlisted UCP of Greater Kansas City to help pursue cases seeking to expand school accessibility for students with disabilities.

UCP of Greater Kansas City recruited Mr. O'Donnell to join its board in 1982, which he eventually led as chairman. In the years since, he has served as a regional board vice-president, a national Trustee, and chairman of the Affiliate Services Committee. He was also deeply engaged in the reorganization of the national organization's by-laws and board structure.

Mr. O'Donnell is currently an attorney for the Kansas City based law firm Polsinelli Shalton Welte & Suelthaus, P.C. As legal counsel to a variety of health management organizations, he is an expert in state and federal managed care regulatory issues, development of provider contracts, and compliance issues including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

"I commend Anita Porco for her steady stewardship and selfless service," said Tom O'Donnell. "And I am honored to lead the board as we continue to build our vision for the future."

An official press release announcing the election of Tom O'Donnell will follow later this week.

For more information, contact Jim Baker at jbaker@ucp.org.

Second Phase of DontBlockMyVote.org Campaign Looks Towards Bush Administration

By Jim Baker

(September 14 - Washington, DC) – With the Presidential election less than 50 days away, United Cerebral Palsy has launched an aggressive second phase to its successful DontBlockMyVote.org voting rights campaign.



The second phase will call on thousands of supporters to call directly on the Bush Administration to back \$650 million in the FY 2005 budget for the implementation of HAVA, not a dollar more than the law itself authorizes.

Already, more than 10,000 activists have logged on and sent letters to Congress urging full funding for HAVA.

President Bush only requested \$65 million for HAVA for 2005, just 10% of the authorized funds. States

simply will not implement the law without the resources promised by the federal government. Seventy-five percent (75%) of all counties in the United States will be using the same voting machines they used in the controversial 2000 election.

When President Bush signed HAVA into law on October 29, 2002, he said, "Every registered voter deserves to have confidence that the system is fair and elections are honest, that every vote is recorded, and that the rules are consistently applied."

HAVA calls for every polling place to be accessible and have at least one accessible voting machine, yet millions of Americans with disabilities will continue to be disenfranchised if President Bush and Congress fail to live up to the promises made when HAVA was passed.

"The right to vote simply is non-negotiable," said Stephen Bennett. "It is a fundamental element of democracy and of our vision for an inclusive society. And the community of people with disabilities will accept no less."

To learn more about the campaign, visit DontBlockMyVote.org or e-mail Daryn Demeritt at ddemeritt@ucp.org.

News and Notes...



Public Policy Collaboration News

The U.S. House of Representatives voted 388 to 13 to pass the Fiscal Year 2005 appropriations bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (L-HHS-ED).

See this week's [Capitol Insider](#) to find out what it all means and to get an update on the week's most important public policy news.

Information and Referral News

For more I&R information, contact Muffi Lavigne at mlavigne@ucp.org.

Share Your Opinions About Workplace Technology, Products and Services

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Workplace Accommodations, <http://www.workrerc.org>, is conducting a consumer survey on workplace technology, products and services for people with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability who uses or has used assistive technology products or services in the workplace, join RERC's Consumer Advisory Network (CAN) and participate in the survey.

AAPD Solicits Nominations for its Henry B. Betts Award

The American Association of People with Disabilities <http://www.aapd-dc.org>, and the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, <http://www.ric.org>, are inviting nominations for the Henry B. Betts Award. Nominations must be received by October 15.

The annual award is designed to honor a living individual whose work and scope of influence have

significantly improved the quality of life for people with disabilities in the United States and around the world. The honoree will receive an unrestricted \$50,000 cash award at AAPD's annual Leadership Gala in Washington, D.C. Funding for the program is provided by the Prince Charitable Trusts.

See the AAPD Web site for complete program guidelines and nomination forms at http://www.aapd-dc.org/awards/awards04/betts_app04.html.

News Round-Up

Affiliate News

United Cerebral Palsy of New York City Plans TechWorksExpo2004

UCP of NYC and the Communication Aid Manufacturers' Association (CAMA) are joining together to produce TechWorksExpo2004, an exciting full-day assistive technology exhibition and conference at the New York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge. The goal of TechWorksExpo2004 is to provide a forum for participants to learn about the latest technology, practical applications, and services available to individuals with disabilities. Fifty exhibitors and over thirty workshop presenters will lead the discussion about the power and flexibility of assistive technology. For more information, visit <http://www.ucpnyc.org>.

Federal News

Paralympics to Begin This Week

From September 17-28, the Paralympic Games will be held in Athens, Greece. Almost 150 countries and 4,000 athletes will be in attendance. The athletes will compete in 18 different sports from football, to volleyball to judo.

UPS Is Sued by Employees with Disabilities

The United Parcel Service (UPS) violated the Americans with Disabilities Act, alleges a national class action lawsuit filed last week. The lawsuit claims that UPS conducted a surface evaluation of its employees' medical conditions but did not meet with employees with disabilities to determine what work they can perform. The plaintiffs would like to see new policies encouraging equal employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

State News

Leader for New Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities Announced

Starting in early October, Shelly Brantley will become the Director of the new Agency for Persons with Disabilities in Florida. She will take on the responsibility of eliminating a waiting list of 15,000 people needing assistance. With the help of an additional \$11 million, she will be able to increase services to remove 2,500 people from the waiting list in the next year. Brantley is the current director in charge of developmental disability programs at the Florida Department of Children & Families.

North Carolina Advocacy Group Sues State Official

The North Carolina Governor's Council for Persons with Disabilities filed a lawsuit against the state's top health official to force her to fix poorly run adult care and nursing facilities. The suit claims the Secretary of Health and Human Services Carmen Hooker-Odom failed to use her power to oversee facilities. A negligent death and other violations at Yelton's Health Care in Cleveland County led the advocacy group to take action.

Settlement Leads District of Columbia to Memorialize Victims of Abuse

The District government hung a plaque in the lobby of the Department of Human Services to honor the

people who have died while in the care of the group home system for people with mentally retardation. The names of ten people were listed on the plaque which came as part a \$500,000 settlement ending a lawsuit filed in one of the men's names.

California Parents Sue Over Prenatal Tests

Parents of a one-year-old girl with spina bifida are suing their obstetrician because they say he did not inform them about prenatal tests which would have shown their daughter's condition. The parents also allege they were not given the choice to have an abortion, which they may have considered knowing that their child would have a disability.

Since 1982, when the California Supreme Court allowed the right to sue for "wrongful life," many couples have filed lawsuits. These types of lawsuits are becoming more prevalent as healthcare costs increase and advances are made in prenatal testing.

For more information about news clippings, please contact Jim Baker at jbaker@ucp.org.