

This is the Disability Rights Hawaii Newsletter for January 2011. It is available by email, print, Large Print, or Braille. Please contact ronald@hawaii.edu, or call 961-5601, to add or remove your name from the mailing list, or to change the format of your Newsletter.

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..... January 25, 2011, Meeting Announcement

Disability Rights Hawaii will meeting from 12:00 noon to 2:00 PM on Tuesday, January 25, in the Training Room of the ADRC Building, 1055 Kinoole Street, in Hilo. After our customary discussion of accessibility in East Hawaii, we will have two speakers. One will be DRH Board Member Martin Hodapp, who will report on the techniques and accommodations that have allowed him to pursue higher education as a person with serious disabilities. (And also, I suspect, some of the barriers that have still made it more difficult than it might have been.) Second, Dr. Ron Wagner-Wright will discuss his progress in setting up a training system for service dogs in East Hawaii. Ron is involved in several other projects for people with visual impairments, and we will learn a lot. The meeting is free and open to the public.

..... November 30, 2010, DRH Meeting Notes

Present: Laura Tobosa, Alisa Mitchener, Ron Amundson, Daniel Grant-Johnson, Chris Cholas, Arcelita Imasa, Sada Anand Kaur, Martin Mimmack, Miho Kusachi, Teri Spinola-Campbell, Gabriella Cabanas

Secretary's Report: Laura reported that as of November 9 we had 715.90. She deposited \$5 to have activity in the account. The bank charges a fee to any accounts that have no activity. There was general agreement that Laura should withdraw \$5.00 next month, rather than slowly deplete her own funds to keep DRH from having bank fee penalties.

Ron reported on a long meeting that the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Disability Access, at UH-Hilo, had with David Poe of DCAB. The topic was how to count the various parking spaces at UHH in order to decide how many Designated Accessible Parking Spaces were required. There was a major dispute about this issue a couple of years ago, when Auxiliary Services Personnel at UHH had claimed that UHH had many more Designated Accessible spaces than it was legally required to have. Disabled people and their organizations strongly condemned this statement, claiming that they knew how hard it was to find an accessible space when they needed one. A special concern was the availability of spaces for public events after class hours on campus, for cultural or sports activities. The plans of Auxiliary Services to remove these spaces, because they were not used during the class day, meant that disabled members of the public would be cut out of access to public events at the University. DRH received information

that a number of members of the public (some of them DRH members) contacted UHH authorities and complained about this policy.

Unfortunately, David Poe did not give a definite answer to our question of how the count should be determined. The outcome was basically that the University should decide on how the parking lots should be counted. If the outcome did not provide sufficient access, we must just leave it up to a lawsuit. Debra Fitzsimons (Vice Chancellor for Administrative Affairs) recognized the problems with this outcome. She said that UHH should determine how the lots should be divided up by negotiations among the interested groups, and that information about the usage of Designated Accessible stalls should be gathered so that decisions are based on the best information possible. Because the campus is constantly changing (especially in recent years) we may have to renegotiate the allocations, possibly every year. Auxiliary Services would continue to count the usage of Designated Accessible stalls in each parking area each semester, and the stalls would be reallocated if necessary. The long discussion about this topic is sure to range into the future. Both UHH students & staff, as well as members of the public (and DRH), should be ready to contribute to these discussions.

The group asked if Ron could inform DRH about any meetings on campus that would be relevant to accessible parking decisions. Ron said that he would forward any knowledge he had.

Chris Cholas reported that Karen, a PA with ARC, was working with Ron Wagner-Wright about setting up a place to train service dogs. [Ron Wagner-Wright will report to the January DRH meeting.]

Chris also reported that the State DD Council would meet on December 16, from 10:00-12:00 at Wailoa Park. Anyone who has a developmental disability or works with someone with a DD should give their input.

Chris, again, brought up the question of who was in charge of safety in Pahoa. Wheelchair users are absolutely in jeopardy while trying to move about the downtown area in Pahoa. He reported about a woman who was having trouble, and seemed almost certain to be injured by traffic because there was no safe walkway she could enter. Something must happen about this horrible situation. Teri Spinola-Campbell said that Chris should talk to Warren Lee at Public Works. Fred Blas is the new Puna Councilmember -- maybe we could talk with him.

Teri wanted to clarify our September Newsletter. (Surprisingly, there was a confusion conveyed by our usually-flawless reports.) The Newsletter had said that ordinary wheelchair users could go "anywhere" under the new rules. The new rules actually said that certain kinds of high-powered devices, such as golf carts, were restricted in where they could go, but ordinary wheelchairs can go "anywhere that ordinary walkers can go." By saying that wheelchair users could go "anywhere," our Newsletter seemed to imply that wheelchairs could enter private residences, or other areas that ordinary pedestrians cannot go. The Editor apologizes for this error. Wheelchair

users cannot go "anywhere." They cannot enter private homes without permission, and most of them cannot fly. (Joke, joke.)

Danny brought up the broken-up walkway near Punahale. He asked Teri how can we find out what the status is of improvements to that walkway. Teri said that she would check on how this project was going. [See below.] We could also get a form from the website of Public Works and complain about that walkway. Teri also explained the concept of "maximum effect feasible" under the ADA. This was in response to Ron's thought that the fact that the Punahale walkway was too steep might be an excuse for the County not to repair it. Such an excuse was illegitimate, according to Teri.

We again discussed the problem with locating the rest rooms that were being camped-out-in by TSA personnel. Chris gave details in the meeting, but we need to check with other users.

Alisa suggested that we might, at the next meeting, ask for any reaction to the new, more extreme, TSA screening procedures.

Gabriella Cabanas, a County employee, came to discuss the Business Leadership Network. The Network is designed to promote the hiring and professional development of people with disabilities. There is an East Hawaii chapter; the next meeting December 7, 10:30. The group gets some funds from a Medicaid source. Marty Mimmack and Teri have each acted as resource speakers. Got help with the name for an award recognizing employers that hire and support individuals with disabilities. Ho'o Mohala was the chosen name. Some employers were shy about being recognized for hiring pwds. Marty was nominated in the small business category. The organization is linked with several local businesses and government organizations.

The meeting ended with Marty's report on his incredible adventures in Alaska, traveling alone on a trip that brought him to give a number of informative and educational talks to schools and other public organizations. Ron was especially impressed with Marty's "survivor man" travels, alone in Alaska. Ron's trip last summer to Germany convinced him that he will now travel only in the company of his wife Sherry. Sherry doesn't speak German, but she can tell Ron where the accessible subway stops are, and she knows when Ron should just shut up and take a nap.

Newsnotes:

The Komohana-Punahale walkway has been improved (at last)! The job took a long time, but the news was quick. Less than an hour after the DRH meeting ended, Teri Spinola-Campbell reported that the County had contracted for repair of the walkway, and it should be finished in mid-January. It is finished as of this writing, and Danny has inspected it. He reports a very good job. The edge of the asphalt sidewalk has been brightly painted for safety, and small turn-off rest areas are installed on the way up the toilsome path. Some would still prefer concrete to asphalt, but the improvement in this area is huge, and very important. Increasing numbers of medical facilities are served by this walkway. Like the walkway up to the Hilo Medical Center, this path

is important to very many East Hawaii residents, especially those with low income and/or disabilities. DRH has been talking about this one since around the year 2000, and about the Medical Center walkway since we were formed in 1992. Getting the job done was slow for both pathways, but it is a tremendous relief to get them finally completed -- we can now get to health care, and we can get there safely.