

This is the Disability Rights Hawaii Newsletter for March 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.

..... CONTENTS

- March 29, 2011 Meeting Announcement
- January 25, 2011 Meeting Notes
- NewsNotes

..... March 29, 2011, Meeting Announcement

Disability Rights Hawaii will meeting from 12:00 noon to 2:00 PM on Tuesday, March 29, in the Aupuni Center Conference Room, 101 Pauahi Street in Hilo. We will discuss several recent accessibility issues in Hilo, including our meeting with the management of the new McDonalds restaurant on Kinoole Street, and the County's completion of the sidewalk on Kapiolani. At 1:00 PM we will welcome Tom Brown, County Directory of Mass Transit. Tom will report on the new funds that Senator Inouye has announced for County Mass Transit, and how they will affect transportation for people with disabilities.

..... January 25, 2011, Meeting Notes

Present:

Laura Tobosa, Daniel Grant-Johnson, Martin Hodapp, Marianne Hodapp, Wesley Tanigawa (Arc of Hilo), Teri Spinola-Campbell (County of Hawaii), Donna Whitaker (Hawaii Human Society), Christina Sato (HI 5-0 Training Center), Karen Furtado (HI 5-0 Training Center), Leihuanani Ah Choy (HI 5-0 Training Center), Dr. Ron Wagner-Wright (HI 5-0 Training Center), Colin Stewart (Hawaii Tribune-Herald), Ron Amundson

Treasurer's report: Our deposit total stands at 720.90. Laura deposited \$5 on Jan 9 in order to avoid a charge for an inactive account. Members encouraged her to withdraw \$5 next month -- that's activity in the account also! Danny reported that the DRH voicemail bill was due next month; \$83.40 for the year.

Secretary's report: Chris Cholas (who missed this meeting because of travel commitments) is going to check on new construction that Danny identified. It is a four unit apartment building with two units on each floor. Ron surveyed the outside of the building. There was a correctly striped parking w/ accessible space, but all downstairs apartments have a 4" lip at the doorway. This is illegal construction according to the Fair Housing Act; any building with four units must have accessible ground-floor units. We must do our best to enforce this ruling, or we will all be out on the streets or crawling up stairs. (Visitability anyone?)

Danny reported on the recent repairs on the asphalt walkway on Komohana. Rest stops were inserted along the way. This was very thoughtful, and a novel solution. He also reported a problem with the sidewalk on Kilauea, in front of Sack & Save. The concrete is all broken up. He will file a form with the County.

Laura reported that sometime in March an organization will be providing independent living services on the Big Island. We hope for more details on this.

Teri reported that she has some good training DVDs on customer service for bus drivers. We might show those at a future DRH meeting.

Martin gave a powerpoint presentation on his adventures at UH-Hilo -- some good, some bad. His detailed presentation was given early in the meeting, with only a small group of DRH members. We will schedule it again when a larger audience is available to see it -- perhaps we can get some UH-Hilo representatives to view the problems Martin has encountered. (Ron has reported some of the walkway problems to UHH planners. He will report the outcomes at a later meeting.)

Dr. Ron Wagner-Wright arrived with several associates who are going to begin a service dog training program in Hilo. An excellent report on Dr. Ron's talk, authored by Colin Stewart, was in the Hawaii Tribune-Herald and on their web site. Unfortunately, that web site was only available for 30 days. DRH will work with HTH to try to get the report available again. We will post it on the DRH web site if we get permission.

Dr. Ron's project gathered supporters from several East Hawaii organizations, both public and private, who have professional skills in the care, treatment, and training of dogs (Donna Whitaker, Christina Sato, Leihuanani Ah Choy, and Karen Furtado). These specialists will choose and train high quality service dogs. The first recipient of a service dog will be DRH Board Member Martin Hodapp. Most DRH members know Martin's service dog Dudley. Dudley attends DRH meetings, UHH classes, and everything else Martin does. But Dudley has been aging, and is near retirement. (I can sympathize.) When Martin tells Dudley to go and get one of Martin's parents, the dog (almost) says "Do I have to?" When he was younger, the dog was eager. (Again, I can sympathize.)

The program has been designated the "Hawaii 5-0" service dog training center, for reasons explained in the HTH article. (Jack Lord's wife was a contributor ...) They had planned to have their web site up and running soon after our meeting, but it has been delayed. The eventual site will be at "hawaiiservicedogs.org" but don't click that yet. Their email address is hawaiiservicedogs@gmail.com. Dr. Ron's own web site is up and running, at:

http://web.me.com/doctorron1/Site/The_Blind_Specialist.html

..... NewsNotes

-- Hawaii Tribune-Herald's coverage of Dr. Ron's service dog training program.

Colin Stewart was at the January 25 DRH meeting, and wrote a newspaper article about the service dog training program that Dr. Ron Wagner-Wright and his associates were setting up. The article was published on the front page of the Hawaii Tribune-Herald on February 5. HT-H has given DRH permission to offer a pdf copy of that 2-page article on the DRH web site. The article is a high quality pdf with two color photos. One photo is of Martin Hodapp, his aging service dog Dudley, and his (not-aging) mother Marianne. The other is of Dr. Ron Wagner-Wright and his service dog Spencer McGarrett. The document is large -- about 500 kilobytes. But you can download it from this link if you want it.

<http://tinyurl.com/4jck55r>

-- Disabled Youth Invent a (Disabled) Superhero --

Here is an interesting USA Today story about a group of Syrian and American youth with disabilities who met in a cross-cultural visit. They decided to create a comic book superhero who had lost his legs to a land mine. The story reports on a long series of discussions about story lines. Interestingly (or maybe obviously) none of the stories were about curing the superhero's disability. The superheros had unique and amazing super powers, but still had their impairments. The impairments did not harm the superpowers. The superhero with the wheelchair had the power to mentally bend

metals to bend to suit his desires. There's a cool drawing of the wheelchair superhero at the USA Today site, at:

http://www.usatoday.com/life/comics/2010-09-26-muslim-superhero_N.htm

Ron Amundson, Dept. of Philosophy
University of Hawaii at Hilo
Hilo, HI 96720