

❖ Inclusive Futures ❖

Issue 7

"Everyone has a right to belong"

January 2001

Do you know what it is like to feel you are of no value to society?
To know people come to help you because they believe you have nothing to offer?

You hold out your hand and beckon me to come and integrate.
How can I come with any dignity?

I shall not come as an object of pity.
I shall come in dignity or I shall not come at all.

Chief Dan George

The Alliance for Inclusive Education

Campaigns for:

- an amendment to the 1996 Education Act to effect the immediate end of compulsory segregation of children with disabilities or learning difficulties from ordinary schools.
- The requirement in law to make mainstream educational establishments accessible to all in terms of premises, facilities and curriculum
- The transfer of resources, both financial and human, from segregated provision to one diverse, inclusive education system
- The introduction of national policy on inclusive education to guide Local education authorities and educational professionals as to the implementation of the law.

Contact them on 0207 735 5277 to join.

They who dance
are thought mad
by those who
hear not the
music

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"Since the beginning of time, humans have shared their lives with those around them. Families shared their fish from the sea, gathered reeds for thatched roofs and looked at the stars together. We have watched out for each other. Now for the first time in human history many of us feel alone and unconnected to groups. The world has changed but we have not. We all want love, respect, good work and interesting pastimes. We want a safe, stimulating world for our children and friends and a planet that will survive. We humans are more alike than we are different."

Mary Pipher (1996) "The Shelter of Each Other" p 112

The Language of Love

Like most newlyweds, my husband and I hardly needed to speak. We communicated by look and touch, by smiles and laughter and through a verbal shorthand that relied as much on telepathy as the spoken word. It was, of course, the language of love.

When he died, after 35 years of happy marriage, the love was still there, but the language seemed to be lost. Where we had once needed so few words to say so much, I now had to express things with an almost pedantic use of syntax and grammar.

The change came when, over a period of ten years, Michael suffered a series of ischaemic attacks - small strokes which knocked out discrete areas of his brain. The effects were often quite subtle, though there were some step changes, presumably when it was a 'language centre' which had been attacked.

It's easy to assume that, if someone loses the ability to speak clearly or coherently, the ability to understand has also been lost. But I knew that, in Michael's case, this was far from true. Direct questions or one to one conversations were difficult; a barrier seemed to pop up - perhaps caused by the very act of trying to produce the answer or reply that was obviously awaited. It was noticeable, though, that when several people were talking in a group which included Michael - and it he was interested in the topic under discussion - he would interject very relevant comments.

He was also able to produce puns and witticisms with surprising speed. If we expected nothing of his, he responded well. This 'inspirational' speech gave me an idea.

Michael was a physicist, whose real interests were firmly based in the world of science, maths and engineering. He never lost his ability to produce scientific formulae, though he couldn't always find the word for a chair. We had moved from Scotland ten days before his first stroke, so his former colleagues were too far away to visit him on a regular basis; but when I wrote to the Institute of Physics to cancel Michael's subscription, they asked if there was anything they could do to help.

They had in mind financial help; what I needed was something much more valuable. I asked if they knew of any retired members of the Institute in our area who might be willing to come, either for lunch or tea, and just talk. The Secretary sent out letters to a number of people with post codes close to our own and within days the first reply came. At the end there was a warning - the writer was 92 and nearly blind.

Undaunted, we arranged for him and his wife to come for lunch and from the moment we met we knew it was going to be a success. Topics ranged from music to art to literature to sailing and, yes, there was a bit about science! Martin and Michael had

travelled almost parallel paths about 20 years apart. His wife and I felt we had known one another for ever.

Five more members were brave enough to take up the challenge. What we were asking was that they should come to strangers and converse with someone whose ability to communicate was severely impaired. Being physicists, they probably regarded it in the light of an experiment!

The results were just as I had hoped. Michael obviously enjoyed the company, joined in occasionally and had lots to think about when our guests had gone. It was the stimulus he needed and I think that this knowledge meant that our new friends - for that is what they became - were well rewarded for their courage.

When Michael died he was, I believe, a happy man who had been able to live life to the full. His speech problems might have left him isolated, or ignored as someone not worth bothering to engage. Instead he was able to share with fellow scientists the miracle of the human spirit and the power of love.

Susan Hartnell-Beavis

Write to us at *Inclusive Futures*, 49 Northcliffe Avenue, Mapperley, Nottingham, or email to batesmp@ndt.org.uk

Educator fought for inclusion of mentally handicapped

Donn Downey, The Globe and Mail, Toronto. June 2000.

It might have been a scene from Alabama in 1963 -- two families taking their children to school, daring school officials to turn them away. But it was 1989 and the schools were in Ontario. The children were not black, but had learning disabilities. And in this instance the schools turned away the children while reporters scribbled notes and photographers snapped pictures.

The attempt to evoke the image from the United States Deep South was deliberate, and was the brain-child of Marsha Forest: a former assistant professor of education at York University who was dedicated to the inclusion of people with learning disabilities with the rest of society. Special education programs were, in her view, "an apartheid system of education."

Dr. Forest died last week after suffering from cancer for 12 years. She was 52. *Dream Catchers and Dolphins*, an account of her struggle with the disease, was compiled and written by Dr.

Forest and her husband Jack Pearpoint.

Together, they founded the Centre for Integrated Education and Inclusion Press International. Both foster the idea of an inclusive education and community.

"She had a vision about people that was contagious," said Keith Powell, executive director of the Ontario Association for Community Living. "Inclusion was an absolute given." The association presented her with its lifetime achievement award about two weeks ago. While Director of Education at Toronto's Frontier College between 1987 and 1990, Dr. Forest also established a course called *Vive la Difference*, which exposed medical students to people who were disabled or had chosen a lifestyle far from the middle-class norm. On at least one occasion, the lecturer was a former biker who, in his own words, had "been arrested and charged with every crime in the book. If you're going to be a good family doctor, you're not just going to meet nice white well-educated people," she said by way of explanation.

Dr. Forest took a particular interest in one student, another convicted criminal, who was once labelled "learning disabled." He was finally taught to read while he was sitting at her kitchen table. "I asked for the toughest student Frontier could give me and they gave me Tracy," she said. "I believe trainers always have to have a student to keep fresh.

"Teachers get what they expect, she said. "Unless you believe in students, they won't learn. These kids, they're put in 'opportunity' classes, they sit at the back of the room. The process turns into a cruel charade from which "dumb kids" or "stupid troublemakers"

emerge as walking time bombs turning into angry criminals or passive victims."

Marsha Forest was born in New York City on Aug. 10, 1942. While she was an undergraduate at Queen's College, City University of New York, she discovered poverty and started teaching under the Brooklyn Bridge. Her students were black children who had been abandoned by the education system.

She got her bachelor's degree from Queen's College in 1963 and her master's degree from Columbia University in 1964. From there she went to the University of Massachusetts, where she earned her doctorate in education. She taught at the Lexington School for the Deaf in New York while she was still in university, and came to Canada in 1968 as a special consultant at the Montreal Oral School for the Deaf. From there she went to McGill University as an assistant professor in the department of continuing education.

During the week of the Paralympic Games, a reader wrote to the Salt Lake Tribune to say her little boy had seen a man in a wheelchair and instead of asking what was wrong with him had asked if he was a basketballer.

In America, there are local Business Leadership Networks. Employers meet together to look at the workforce needs and look at strategies to include people with disabilities. The employers also lead the group to determine what kind of events should occur, recruiting other employers to the table and creating ways to get the information out. There is more information on: www.pcepd.gov

Inequality has risen to the point where the world's richest 350 people have fortunes greater than the combined wealth of the poorest 45% of the world's population.

Roberto Bissio (1997)
"Social Watch"

Inclusion means the poorest people too.

A new job scheme has been launched to place people with learning disabilities in work without traditional job coaches. Under the scheme colleagues volunteer to become mentors. They are trained in disability awareness and then help the new employee settle in and learn the ropes. An employment specialist is available for training and trouble-shooting, but does not take over day-to-day supervision.

WINS is being run by Pathway and ENABLE in northern England and Scotland.

Facing the Facts - services for people with a learning disability

This is the title of a research report from the Government published in November 1999. They looked at 24 local authority areas. The number of people offered supported employment varied from a high of 8.88 people per 10,000 population in Swindon to a low of 0.03 people per 10,000 in Staffordshire - that works out at just two people for the county. Let's hope that they are doing better by 2001!

Changing the world.

The New Economics Foundation studied 'social entrepreneurs'. These are people who spot under-utilised potential and build communities. They are people who believe in social justice and work to make the world a better place. They work to improve the position of those excluded from the mainstream by utilising resources in new ways.

The report identified four factors which social entrepreneurs have in common:

- they empower others - especially people who usually are seen as being economically and socially inactive and a drain on society to live full and engaged lives.
- they create space for creativity and celebration. These events are not simply an end in themselves but also as a means of raising confidence and as stepping stones to other forms of community activity and engagement.
- they gain strength from a wide network of alliances, from non-profit to business organisations, both likely and unlikely.
- they start out before they have all the skills they need.

Stephen Thake and Simon Zadik (1997)
"Practical People, Noble Causes"

Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it.

A.A. Milne.

Lucy had her National Record of Achievement Evening at her school, which is a big do, like a graduation. The school had rung us very apologetically to say that they couldn't make the stage accessible and when she came to get her award, someone would come down off the stage to give it to her. I was not very pleased to hear this, but when the event happened, the whole of her tutor group stayed down at ground level because, in their own words, "We wanted to be together"!

Inclusive Play Opportunities Project (IPOP)

IPOP's mission is

- to provide opportunities for children of all abilities to play together;
- to offer support and advice to families of children with disabilities
- to raise awareness of the benefits of inclusive provision both in play settings and more widely.

IPOP was started in 1994 to increase the number of children with disabilities using mainstream, out-of-school play provision in the London Borough of Barnet.

The Project provides a support worker to an individual child and a 12 week placement, once a week, in an After School Club close to the child's home.

A review meeting is then held to discuss how the club can continue to support the child. Over half the children at this stage do not need additional support. If a child does need extra support then the Project discusses these needs with the family and Social Services and extra funding may be agreed as part of the child's care package.

The 12 week 'settling in' period provides an essential good start to the child's inclusion in the play setting.

Paul is 10 years old and goes to Allsorts after-school club. He has Cerebral Palsy. Paul says, "I like Allsorts because I get to meet and play with different adults and children, they also live near so I sometimes see them around my area. During the holidays we do lots of exciting things and have trips out.

Karen, Paul's mum says, "Because Paul goes to school out of borough he didn't have any local friends but since he's been going to Allsorts they all know him!"

Christine the playleader says, "The first thing you notice about Paul is his smile. The able bodied children ask questions and we all learn. Without the kids here most of us would never come across disability - it's something more than a joy having allsorts of kids here."

From this beginning many benefits to the child, the family and the club develop.

For the child:

- ⇒ *improvements in communication*
- ⇒ *social skills*
- ⇒ *self-confidence*
- ⇒ *co-ordination.*

For the family:

- ⇒ *feeling a part of the community*
- ⇒ *taking up work or studies*
- ⇒ *spending more time with other children in the family.*

For the club:

- ⇒ *increased confidence in working with children of all abilities*
- ⇒ *awareness-raising and education for all the children using the club.*

IPOP currently supports

around 100 children to participate in more than a dozen after-school clubs and also in a number of summer playschemes.

"At IPOP we respect the right of every child to safe and stimulating play with appropriate support in a setting of their own and their family's choice. We offer services which are responsive to need and acknowledge the vital role of families as partners in our work."

"We believe that healthy communities include everyone and that all children benefit from playing together in an environment which offers the same opportunities to everyone."

Contact IPOP on Tel 0208 441 0404.

Older people as volunteers - what works?

Few older people take up formal opportunities to do voluntary work. A study in the London Borough of Hackney examined the reasons for this. Their report concluded with some recommendations, which may apply to other people at risk of exclusion too. Here are some of the recommendations:

- 1 Take action to reach out to the potential volunteers, rather than waiting for them to come to you
- 2 Make publicity informative and colourful
- 3 Do not make assumptions about the person's wishes, interests and abilities.
- 4 Ensure there is adequate preparation and support
- 4 Work with people to help them recognise their skills
- 5 Offer interesting work with a chance to use one's skills
- 6 Reimburse expenses and help with transport if necessary
- 7 Create a friendly and welcoming atmosphere where people can feel comfortable
- 9 Give people a chance to make a real contribution but not be used as 'cheap labour'.
- 10 Show people that their contribution is valued, not taken for granted.
- 11 Offer formal or informal training opportunities, with the option of accreditation for those who wish to participate.
- 12 Be flexible to allow for health problems and family commitments.

Voluntary Action Vol 2 No 1, pp76-77

Student mental health guide

A new set of guidelines gives universities and colleges information on dealing effectively with mental health problems amongst students. They are designed to help staff and other students with the means of lending appropriate support. Included in the document are outlines of the legal framework of equal opportunities and disability discrimination legislation, the social context, checklist for institutions devising policies and examples of good practice in UK universities. Send £7.50 to Tracy Baird, CVCP, Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HQ. Tel 020 7419 5435.

Promoting social inclusion has to involve local communities as well as service providers. SHS (tel 0131 538 7717) are currently working with South Edinburgh Partnership to gather information about what's happening in the community, and to organise a FutureSearch conference where a wide range of local people can come together to find common ground in planning changes for their community.

Inclusion in Spain

The Institute of Community Integration at the University of Salamanca have an extensive programme of research and service development. Initiatives include:

- finding out what qualities people need to be successfully self employed. The next step is a vocational programme to prepare people with disabilities for self employment.
- developing a comprehensive plan for people with disabilities within one local authority area. This includes education, health, employment, culture etc.
- the development of instruments to evaluate attitudes towards disabled people.

Telling our own stories.

This collection of reflections on family life in a disabling world is edited by Pippa Murray and Jill Penman. It came about through our own families' experience of living with and learning about impairment and disability. Neither our upbringing nor the world around us seemed to offer a picture of the ordinary lives we wanted for our families. We have been unable to find many published accounts of stories from families on the theme of living in a disabling world. We wanted this collection to offer people the opportunity to tell their own stories in this context. It is in the telling of the stories that the isolated individual experience becomes part of the bigger picture. We also wanted people to have the opportunity to listen to these stories; it is in the listening that connections can be made. 285 pages. Send cheques for £9.50 made out to Parents with Attitude to PWA, PO Box 1727, Sheffield S11 8WS.

Incurably Human by Micheline Mason

A reader comments: "By piecing together a personal journey of discovery, the author explores the deeper meaning of inclusion. She looks at how communities, families and schools are being fragmented by the forces of capitalism and global economics, and how the past eugenic policies still influence the assumptions and thinking that perpetuates a culture of exclusion. The book is powerful in demonstrating how friendships and relationships are key in overcoming inclusion and offers practical examples to assist anyone to set up their own support "circles".

Micheline also looks at the development of a dynamic resistance movement led by disabled people and those who love them and proposes that this is the beginning of a truly, radical, non-violent world change movement, of relevance to every living person."

It costs £7.99 plus £2.00 p&p from Working Press, 47 Melbourne Avenue, London N13 4SY.

"Of course, today, we know that sending people to live in institutions to learn how to live in the community is like sending them to China to learn how to speak French." Charlie Lakin, Minnesota.

"Whatever the activity was, the kids would say, 'Mike's one of us and he's coming along.'" This is what the members of Boy Scout Troop 202 in Utah, said when they insisted on including Michael Augustine, who has cerebral palsy. Michael was awarded the Eagle badge, scouting's highest honour on 24 October 2000.

 * STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS....ST *
 * Europe has funded a Supported Volunteering research *
 * project. Do you know of a volunteer bureau or other *
 * agency that is providing good support to people with a *
 * learning difficulty or a mental health problem so that *
 * they can become volunteers in the wider community? If *
 * so, please contact Peter Bates on 0410 439 677 or email *
 * pbates@ndt.org.uk *

 Enable has a team of five employment support workers who provide a service for people in Shropshire and Telford. In its first 16 months of operation it has helped

- 60 people into paid work
- 50 people into training and education and
- 50 people into work experience placements.

Referrals are mainly received from the Community Mental Health Teams and other mental health services and from Employment Services. Enable is jointly funded by a variety of agencies.

Car parking victory

Clarence Holt's football career ended years ago in a car accident which left him quadriplegic. His job developer, Debbie Williams, had a tough time identifying Clarence's true passions. The one thing that he was passionate about was able-bodied people parking in disabled parking spaces. Eventually Clarence and Debbie found themselves sitting in the county sheriff's office, not quite knowing why. Bruce Elfont, sheriff, explained how he had volunteers passing out tickets to people parking illegally, but he had no budget for this programme.

But - Clarence must have got to the Sheriff that day, because he found some money to employ Clarence on a short term basis as a Disabled Parking Volunteer Coordinator. Once started, the workspace was modified with the help of occupational therapists, and a voice activated computer was obtained.

Three years later, Clarence is still employed at the Sheriff's Department, funded through an increase in payment of disabled parking fines. Last year he was honoured as employee of the year.

We are beginning to feel like participants rather than merely inhabitants in the world.

Since April 1st, 2000, *Greyhound* has guaranteed accessible buses between any of the 2,600 locations it serves. Station based boarding devices will also be equipped along major routes. Greyhound has also agreed to provide training to all its employees in assisting riders with disabilities and will set up an internal dispute resolution committee. This has all happened 18 months before US legislation requires it. Their website (www.greyhound.com) has a section on services for people with disabilities that is a tonic to anyone harassed by UK transport problems!

Healing the past - building an inclusive future.

At the height of the slave trade Liverpool shipowners financed 40% of the European ships involved. The city's wealth grew from the triangular trade which took manufactured goods to Africa, slaves to the Americas and then carrying produce back from the plantations to Britain. Slave ships starting in Liverpool made 5,000 Atlantic crossings.

In 1999, as its last formal act of the millenium, Liverpool city Council passed unanimously a resolution apologising for the city's role in the Atlantic slave trade.

The Council expressed its shame and remorse for the city's role in this 'trade in human misery'. It made 'an unreserved apology' for its involvement in the slave trade and the continual effects of slavery on Liverpool's Black communities.

'The City Council hereby commits itself to work closely with all Liverpool's communities and partners and with the peoples of those countries which have carried the burden of the slave trade. The Council also commits itself to programmes of action, with full participation of Liverpool's Black communities, which will seek to combat all forms of racism and discrimination and will recognise and respond to the city's multicultural inheritance and celebrate the skills and talents of its people.'

The Lord Mayor says that in apologising the city sought neither forgiveness nor absolution. 'It is my belief that Liverpool can only be truly forgiven after a process of reconciliation through action has taken place, he says. The city is planning an event where representatives of those who bear the burden and the legacy of the slave trade, both within the city and from the Americas and Africa, will be invited to set out their vision as to how Liverpool might finally put its past to rest. 'When this process of change is successfully completed we will have earned forgiveness and absolution'.

For a Change magazine April 2000