



MOVING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK

MEMBER NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE MUSEUM OF DISABILITY HISTORY WINTER/SPRING 2019: VOLUME 20



First Lady
Ida Saxton McKinley

First Lady
Ida Saxton
McKinley,
wife of
the 25th
American
President,
William
McKinley,

was treated for many years for epilepsy. Her treatment cast a spotlight on the care of people who had epilepsy in the United States. Eventually, colonies were created so that people with epilepsy could receive advanced medical care and training in work skills. These communities were considerable improvements to the conditions in American poorhouses. Craig Colony was established in Sonyea, NY, about an hour and a half east of Buffalo, NY. The Museum of disABILITY History is pleased to announce the completion of *The Colony Chronicles* by David Mack-Hardiman and Char Szabo-Perricelli.

The work is a tapestry of unique photographs, newspaper articles, post cards and personal memoirs. It is a collage of contradictory perspectives and controversial commentaries. Amidst the rare photos are personal recollections from local residents, employees and former patients and their families. *The Colony Chronicles* is the first comprehensive look inside an institution – it has changed dramatically over the years. From its auspicious opening in 1896, until its closure and conversion into a prison, the entire story of Craig Colony is captured in this intriguing format.

New Book Now Available: *The Colony Chronicles*

The newly released book by David Mack-Hardiman and Char Szabo-Perricelli, *The Colony Chronicles*, is a rare account of life inside the Craig Colony for Epileptics, a unique health institution in New York State. Published by the Museum of disABILITY History, the book is a photo essay, as well as a compilation of stories, documents, old newspaper articles and personal insights into what life was like inside the Colony for patients and employees.

As compassionately shown throughout the pages, institutionalized life was often disturbing, despite the best of intentions. The book binding and contents were designed to look like an old personal journal of items randomly collected throughout the years.

The old Colony property is now a State-run medium security prison. Char is the only photographer who will ever be allowed inside to photo document the buildings that remain. Some of her provocative and sometimes melancholy images are the last since some buildings have been demolished or will be in the near future. She often uses her photography as a means of preservation and to keep visual stories of history and people alive. David Mack-Hardiman enriched the journey through his tireless and passionate research, compassionate writing and wry sense of humor. Together, their dedicated collaboration has produced a truly one-of-a-kind portrayal of institutionalized life as rarely seen by most.

The book is for sale online at amazon.com, store.museumofdisability.org, and at the Museum store, 3826 Main Street, Buffalo, NY.



The Colony Chronicles book cover and a page from the interior.



Pictured L-R: David Mack-Hardiman, associate vice president, People Inc. and Museum of disABILITY History; Rhonda Frederick, People Inc. president and CEO; Doug Platt, Museum of disABILITY History manager and curator; Donald Traynor, Museum of disABILITY History Board of Trustees member and Max Donatelli, chairperson of the Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition.

Suitcase Exhibit Finds a Home: The Lives They Left Behind

The Museum of disABILITY History was pleased to host a grand opening for “The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic” on October 20, 2018. As part of the event, Max Donatelli, chairperson of the Erie County Anti-Stigma Coalition and family advocate for people with developmental disabilities and mental health challenges, spoke about the stigma surrounding mental health.

When Willard Psychiatric Center in New York’s Finger Lakes closed in 1995, workers discovered hundreds of suitcases in the attic of an abandoned building. Since their discovery, an incredible exhibit was created that showcases the moving stories behind these suitcases. “The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic” exhibit has found a home at the Museum of disABILITY History. The goal of the exhibit is to bring the stories of the suitcase owners and a patient-centered view of the history of psychiatry to a wider audience.

A suitcase and its contents, once belonging to a man named Mr. Lawrence Mocha, is displayed as part of the exhibit, thanks to support from his family and the New York State Museum.

The exhibit was created by The Community Consortium, an organization that works to promote the full citizenship and civil rights of people with psychiatric disabilities.

“The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases from a State Hospital Attic” will be on display in our Museum gallery throughout the rest of the year. A portion of it will be available as a traveling exhibit starting in the fall. To pre-register for the exhibit or to arrange a guided tour, email info@museumofdisability.org or call 716.629.3626.



Museum of disABILITY History Celebrates 20 Years

By Nicole Forgiore, Assistant Director for Marketing Communications, People Inc.



It all started with a need and an idea. Now, 20 years since its inception, the Museum of disABILITY History has become a place that has received local and national attention! A project of People Inc., the idea for the Museum of disABILITY History was born in 1998 when founder, James M. Boles,

Edd, and former People Inc. president and CEO, was teaching a college course. He discovered there was no single educational resource to send students to learn about the history of people with disabilities. Fast forward two decades and thousands of people have utilized the Museum as a resource and as an outlet to explore disability history, challenges and accomplishments.

The Museum of disABILITY History is the only one of its kind in the U.S. dedicated to advancing the understanding, acceptance and independence of people with disabilities. To mark its 20 years, about 100 supporters gathered together for a Fundraiser and Auction held at the Museum on May 19, 2018.

During the event, the Museum of disABILITY History presented its Chris Burke Award for Excellence in Disability Advocacy to two honorees: Lynn Sommerstein, a lecturer in Buffalo State’s Exceptional Education Department, and Sujeet Desai, an award-winning musician who was born with Down syndrome. Through their advocacy efforts, Lynn and Sujeet exemplify the value of contributing significant work in the disability community and make inclusion a priority. Additionally, a Certificate of Nomination was provided to award nominees, including: Jonathan Doherty, Robert Edwards Jr., Carl Grayson and Doug J. Usiak.

Photos of the event from our Facebook photo album.



Screenshot of the Speechless cast congratulations video.



A highlight of the event was a series of congratulatory videos for the Museum’s anniversary and exceptional work by the cast of ABC’s *Speechless*. The television show is about Maya DiMeo, a wife and mom who will do anything for her husband, Jimmy, and their kids Ray, Dylan, and JJ – her eldest son with cerebral palsy. The video clips included messages from the cast, including Minnie Driver, John Ross Bowie and Micah Fowler.

The Museum is pleased to have supporters who helped make the fundraiser a success. “For my wife, Katrina, and I, this was our third year chairing this reception,” shared Jeffery Zepowitz, fundraiser co-chairperson. “We are strong supporters of the Museum and appreciate all the work they do. For the 20th anniversary reception, we decided to throw everything at the wall, which included visits from Buffalo Sabres and Bills alumni and comic book superheroes, as well as a special video from Texas Congressman Pete Sessions and videos from ABC’s *Speechless* cast. We were happy that it was a great success.”

We’re thankful to Angela Christoforos of WIVB-TV Channel 4, who was the event emcee. She is a passionate advocate for people with disabilities, including her brother, who has autism.

Community members are encouraged to visit the Museum of disABILITY History throughout the year.



National Attention for Museum of disABILITY History

We're proud to share that the Museum of disABILITY History has been featured nationally and locally in the media over the past year. As the only museum of its kind in the U.S. dedicated to advancing the understanding, acceptance and independence of people with disabilities, this attention helps share its mission with a much wider audience. Some media coverage has included:

The Independent: 10 of the Best Places to Find Political Inspiration, July 12, 2018

AmeriDisability Magazine: Museum of disABILITY History: An Inclusive Space of the Past, Present Future, July/August 2018

The Buffalo News Picture Page, May 30, 2018 (Photo Credit: John Hickey/Buffalo News)

The New York Times: It's Time for a National Museum of Disability, September 5, 2018

The Washington Post: An Archive Honoring the Voices and Experiences of Disabled People, October 20, 2018

WKBW-TV Channel 7: Exhibit Sheds Light on Forgotten Lives, November 10, 2018

WBFO 88.7: Suitcase Exhibit Reveals State Asylum Patients of the Early 1900s, November 13, 2018

Photojournalist Brian Cahn of Zuma Press, a news photo wire service, visited the Museum of disABILITY History, on November 27, 2018. Photos may be used for future use in national media outlets.

Travel Channel: Segment about Museum of disABILITY History aired on Mysteries at the Museum, December 5, 2018

Media outlets who would like to feature or use the Museum of disABILITY History as a reference may contact Nicole Forgiione, assistant director for Marketing Communications, People Inc., at nforgione@people-inc.org or call 716.817.7490. Stay up-to-date on the Museum's news on its Facebook and Twitter pages.

Host a Disability Etiquette Program

The Museum of disABILITY History's Disability Etiquette Program provides an informative training for businesses and organizations. It's a beneficial learning opportunity for human resource professionals, medical and direct support staff, drivers and staff who work in the transportation and retail fields. For more information, email info@museumofdisability.org or call 716.629.3626.

SAVE THE DATE



Dialogues on disABILITY
WORKSHOP

Hosted by the Museum of disABILITY History

Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders in the Classroom, 2019 session

Presented by President and Founder of the Tourette Syndrome Association of Greater New York State, Susan Conners, MEd.

The workshop will focus on Tourette Syndrome (TS) and ways in which parents and educators can help accommodate young people with TS and associated disorders, so that they can reach their full potential.

Saturday, March 30, 2019, 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Museum of disABILITY History 3826 Main Street, Buffalo

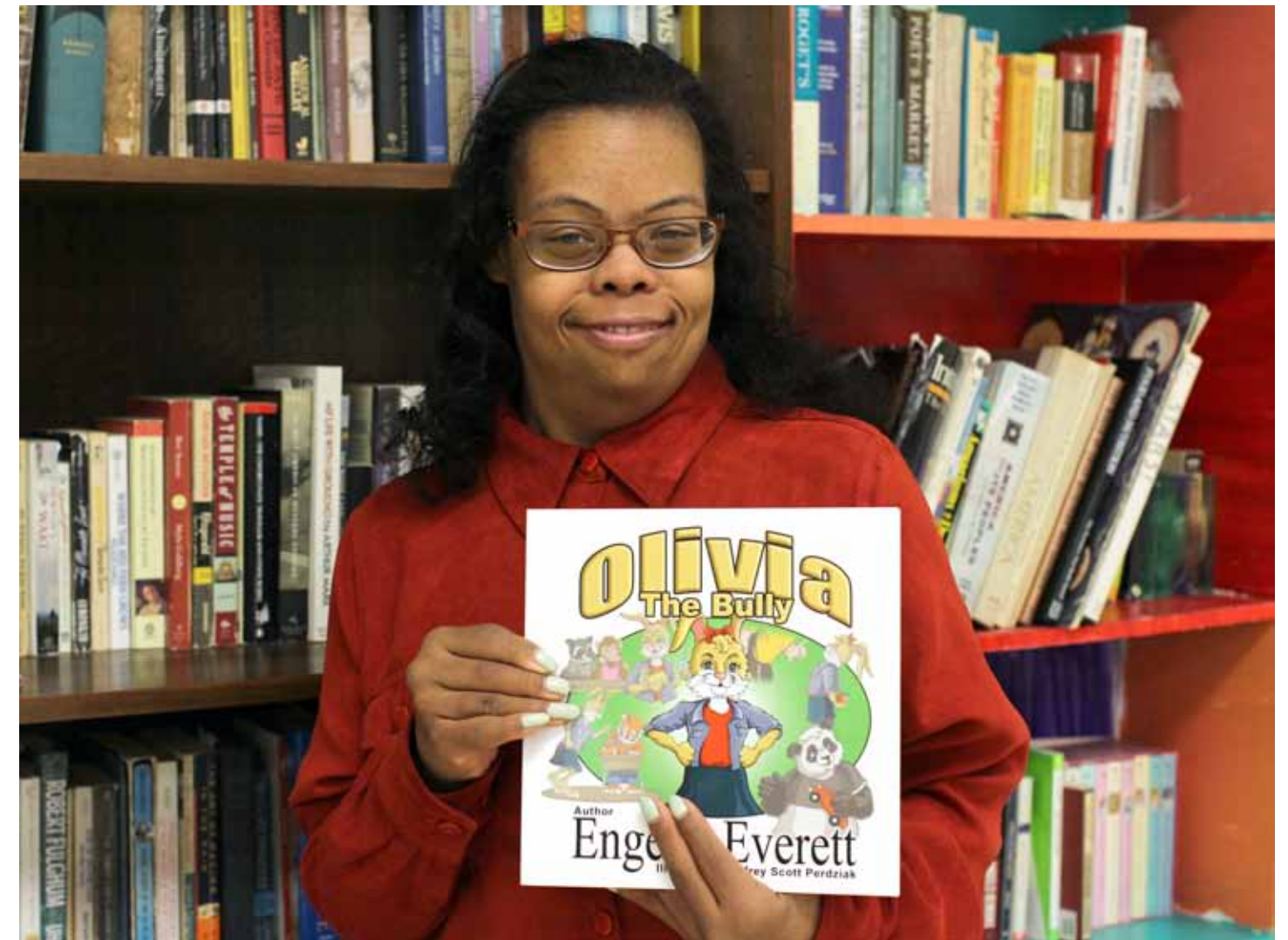
Cost:

Professionals and Parents: \$40

Students: \$10

Additional \$20 for CEU Credit – OT/COTA, PT/PTA

To register or for more information, call 716.629.3626. Payment can be made over the phone with a credit card.



Top-selling Book: *Olivia the Bully*

We're proud of Engelic Everett, author of *Olivia the Bully*, the top-selling book published by the Museum of disABILITY History. The children's book shares the values of friendship, understanding and loving one another. Richly illustrated by Jeff Perdziak, *Olivia the Bully* tells a timeless story conveying a universal message.

Engelic is a small-business owner, an award-winning self-advocate and published playwright. She is committed to making the world a better place for everyone, especially those with disabilities. Engelic lives and thrives with Down syndrome.

The book is for sale at the following:

- Museum of disABILITY History Store: 3826 Main St., Buffalo, NY
- store.museumofdisability.org
- amazon.com
- Monkey See, Monkey Do Children's Bookstore, 9060 Main St, Clarence, NY
- BarnesandNoble.com and select locations
- Vidler's 5 & 10, Inc., 676-694 East Main St., East Aurora, NY



Like us on Facebook!

[museumofdisability](https://www.facebook.com/museumofdisability)

2018 Year in Review in Photos



In January, the Museum of disABILITY History was happy to contribute artifacts to the “Bringing Light to the Darkness” exhibit in Worcester, Massachusetts. Cristi Collari, director of Community Outreach for Alternatives Unlimited, Inc., shared, “We had our opening reception and the objects are a very powerful addition. Thank you for allowing us to borrow them for this exhibit.”



We welcomed Lawrence Carter-Long, director of communications for the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, to our Museum of disABILITY History. He was in town as he was the keynote speaker for the 30th Annual Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day on May 24. Lawrence is an experienced media/communications professional and disability advocate.



In Memory of President George H.W. Bush, a champion for people with disabilities - June 12, 1924 - November 30, 2018. President George H.W. Bush signing the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990. Photo: Part of the Museum of disABILITY History collection.



The Museum of disABILITY History collaborated with the University at Buffalo Dental School for Smile Day at the Museum Health Fair on February 21. Faculty and students from the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine provided dental appraisals for children and adults.



In recognition of World Down Syndrome Day (WDS) on March 21, the Museum of disABILITY History partnered with the Down Syndrome Parents Group of WNY. Family members shared their stories and the Museum’s “In Celebration of Down Syndrome” exhibit was featured.

2018 Year in Review in Photos



Love to read? Need a gift for someone? The Museum of disABILITY History has numerous books in our store and online, including the *Abandoned History Series* collection, children’s books and ones focusing on photography and numerous authors who write about inspiration. Shop in person at our store or online, store.museumofdisability.org.



July 26, 2018, marked the 28th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Museum of disABILITY History was pleased to welcome Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz and Frank Cammarata of the Erie County Office for People with Disabilities, along with representatives of People Inc., WNY Independent Living Inc. and other partners to our Museum of disABILITY History to discuss the history and importance of the ADA.



After sustaining wear and tear damage, the buffalo statue previously displayed outside People Inc. headquarters needed some repairs. Participants and staff of People Inc.’s Arts Experience, a fine arts day habilitation program, gave the statue a much-needed makeover. It is now displayed at its new home outside the Museum of disABILITY History. Stop by and take a photo with the buffalo statue!



In August, the Museum of disABILITY History hosted Kids Day, a family-friendly event that encouraged inclusion for young people of all ages and abilities. Activities included face painting, karaoke, movies, a book reading of *Olivia The Bully* by author Engelic Everett, People Inc. therapy dog visits, sand art and crafts.



As part of Disability History Month in October, Senator Rob Ort hosted a Listening Forum at the Museum of disABILITY History.

In September, we were happy to welcome and provide a tour of the Museum of disABILITY History to museum officials from the nation of Uzbekistan.

Support Us

Your support ensures that the Museum of disABILITY History can continue to tell the story of the lives, triumphs and struggles of people with disabilities – whether through a one-time donation or an annual membership. Your contribution is integral to our ongoing operation.

To make a donation:

Go to museumofdisability.org – click on “Support Us” and choose “Make a Donation.”

Membership Opportunities Available

Individual/Student

\$25

- Unlimited free admission
- Two free admission passes for guests
- 10% discount in the Museum Store
- Museum logo window sticker
- Two free admission passes to the annual disABILITIES Film Festival and Speaker series
- Invitations to Museum special events and exhibit openings
- **NEW MEMBERSHIPS:** One complimentary Museum publication (valued at \$5.95).

Family/Dual

\$45

Same as Individual and also includes:

- One additional membership for a family member or friend
- **NEW MEMBERSHIPS:** One complimentary Museum publication (valued at \$9.95).

Friend

\$100

Same as Individual and also includes:

- Two additional free admission passes for guests (total of 4)
- 10% discount on traveling exhibit rental
- An exclusive private tour of the Museum, library and archives with the Museum Curator
- Invitations to “Friends of the Museum” appreciation event
- **NEW MEMBERSHIPS:** One complimentary Museum publication (valued at \$9.95).

Sustainer

\$250

Same as Friend and also includes:

- Two additional free admission passes for guests (a total of 6)
- Invitation to UB Center for Disability Studies events
- Recognition on the electronic display in the Museum’s lobby
- **NEW MEMBERSHIPS:** One complimentary Museum publication (valued at \$64.95).

Corporate

\$500

- Unlimited free admission for your employees (as long as employee ID is presented)
- Six free admission passes for guests (non-employees)
- 10% discount in the Museum Store (as long as employee ID is presented)
- 15% discount on traveling exhibit rental and offsite presentations
- Invitations to “Friends of the Museum” appreciation event
- Recognition on the electronic display in the Museum’s lobby
- Invitations to Museum special events and exhibit openings

Educational Organization

\$1200

- Free museum admission for employees and students
- Ten free admissions for guests
- 10% discount in Museum Store
- 15% discount on traveling exhibit rentals
- Two complimentary disability history lectures
- Complimentary organizational logo displayed at Museum
- Invitations to Museum events
- Use of Museum library resources

Thank you to NYSID

New York State Industries for the Disabled, Inc. (NYSID) employees donate one dollar to wear jeans to work; funds are donated to a charitable foundation of its choosing that is related to its mission of advancing employment and other opportunities

for people with disabilities. In October 2018, the Museum of disABILITY History was chosen to receive a donation of \$240. Thank you to NYSID employees for your support!

Curator’s Corner: Display, Research and Resource

By Doug Platt, Museum Manager and Curator



Our Museum Gallery is one point of interface with the public - it contains a broad overview of the history of people with disabling conditions in a display format that has been accessed by a wide range of students from across Western New York. We have provided guided group tours for elementary school students as well as those in college. One group from a local Museum Studies Program got a “behind the scenes” look at our Archive and Library.

We have had research and image requests regarding many topics, including: The history of Craig Colony and epilepsy, the employment and

depiction of people with disabilities in “Freak Shows,” early Massachusetts institutional history, the 50th anniversary of the Special Olympics and life at the Ohio Hospital for Epileptics in the 1950s. Most researchers have become members of our Museum.

Our traveling exhibits have been in demand and on display in Florida, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia and Washington D.C., as well as at venues across New York State. The United States Military Academy Library at West Point hosted our “War & disABILITY” exhibit this past October. Outreach efforts have included Disability Etiquette presentations for the University at Buffalo’s School of Family Medicine, Occupational and Physical Therapies Departments and the Buffalo Field Office of the FBI.

We’re proud to be a resource to so many locally and nationally.

“Our traveling exhibits have been in demand and on display in Florida, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia and Washington D.C., as well as at venues across New York State.”

Rent Disability-themed Traveling Exhibits

The Museum of disABILITY History has a number of traveling exhibits available for rent, which have drawn big crowds in other parts of the country. Some of the popular exhibits include: African-Americans and the Disability Experience; From Colonial Times, Desegregation, Advocacy and Achievement; In the Game: Sports and Disability; The Kennedy Connection; Madness in America: A History of Mental Health; Reel Life: disABILITY Goes to the Movie and In Celebration of Down Syndrome.

The traveling exhibits can be shipped directly to a business, college or organization for conferences and events. To rent a traveling exhibit or for more information, send an inquiry to info@museumofdisability.org or call 716.629.3626.

Thank you to the United States Military Academy Library at West Point in West Point, NY, for displaying our War and Disability traveling exhibit.



Once Buried, Not Forgotten

By Emma Alvarado, Intern, Marketing Communications, People Inc.

For more than a decade, the Museum of disABILITY History, along with People Inc. staff and program participants, has volunteered to clean and care for the grounds of many institutional cemeteries in Western New York. These cemeteries were formerly abandoned and neglected.

The caring for the cemeteries started in 2006, when David Mack-Hardiman of People Inc. and the Museum of disABILITY History, aligned with the nationwide Operation Dignity movement to restore institutional cemeteries. Since then, there have been four cemeteries restored including the latest one, Niagara County Almshouse.

Volunteers rake, weed, plant and trim trees. Goals for this project are for the cemeteries' landscaping to be maintained and to have the cemetery represent the memory and honor of all buried there.

Many people have shown gratitude towards the volunteers for restoring the cemeteries. William Ross, chairman of the Niagara County Legislature, thanked the workers for their restoration efforts and assistance by participating in constant care of the cemetery.



The National Federation of Just Communities of WNY awarded the Museum of disABILITY History the 2017 Community Leader Arts/Culture Award, along with a Certificate of Congratulation from Senator Timothy Kennedy. This award recognizes leadership and inspiration in the community and is presented to those who have made important contributions.

Another goal is to identify some of the people buried in the once-abandoned properties. What seemed like a long lost dream became a reality when multiple people came forward and identified their ancestors. This includes Christopher McDonough from Charleston, South Carolina. "You have given us our grandfather. We never met him as the family kept his life a secret to all of us children," said Christopher. "When you were able to provide his death certificate and location of his burial, my life changed forever."

To learn more about this project, to volunteer or for assistance to potentially identify ancestors, contact David Mack-Hardiman at dmack@people-inc.org or at 716.629.3606.

Guest Contribution

Making Dreams Come True

By Jessica Levesque, Actress and Artist



I'm an actress, artist, entrepreneur, interviewer and a woman with a high functioning form of autism. For many years, teachers and others told me, "No," when I said I wanted to be an actress and more. I performed on-stage for awhile and I did my first independent film in Rochester, NY, in 2016. I recently finished filming a documentary called

Fred Heads. Not only does the movie talk about Freddy, an evil monster, but it also touches on bullying and community inclusion. It's a real honor to be in this film, which will be coming out in the beginning of 2019.

In October 2018, I did a play for Inclusive Theater of WNY called, "And Where Will You Put the Things You Save," an original production that was shown at Alleyway Theatre in Buffalo, NY. For the first time, I was a main character in a play. I was honored and really excited to be part of this amazing performance.

Did I listen to the people that tried to put me down? No way!



Cast and crew from
"And Where Will You Put the Things You Save."

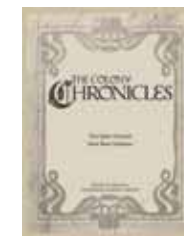
Save these Dates for our 2019 Events

All events (except for book-signing), held at the Museum of disABILITY History, 3826 Main Street, Buffalo NY 14226.



World Down Syndrome Day Thursday, March 21, 2019

Families from Down Syndrome Parents Syndrome Group of WNY to share their stories. Free admission will be offered to the Museum of disABILITY History's gallery space between the hours of 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



The Colony Chronicles Book Signing Rochester, Wednesday, March 27, 2019 10:30 am until 12 noon

Museum of disABILITY History Dialogues on disABILITY Speaker Series Book Signing of *The Colony Chronicles* by Char Szabo-Perricelli and David Mack-Hardiman.



Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders in the Classroom, 2019 session Saturday, March 30, 2019

Presented by Susan Conners, MEd, author; president and founder of the Tourette Syndrome Association of Greater New York State. Held at the Museum of disABILITY History.



Conversation about Epilepsy with Kyle Kiefer Wednesday, April 27, 2019, 10:30 am

Museum of disABILITY History Dialogues on disABILITY Speaker "A Conversation about Epilepsy" Presented by Kyle Kieffer, epilepsy advocate and Digital Marketing specialist, Gordon Companies.



Secret Path shown Friday, May 3, 2019 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm

Reception: 5 p.m., held between screenings.

For more information about these upcoming events, visit facebook.com/museumofdisability or call 716.629.3626.



MUSEUM INFO

3826 Main Street, Buffalo NY 14226
716.629.3626
info@museumofdisability.org
museumofdisability.org
store.museumofdisability.org

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday - Friday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Sunday and Monday: Closed

ADMISSION

General Admission:

Museum Members.....	FREE
People Inc. employees.....	FREE
Adults.....	\$6.00
Students, Seniors, and Human Service Employees.....	\$3.50
Children ages 6-17.....	\$3.00
Children ages 5 and under.....	FREE

Group Tour Rates:

All groups (greater than or equal to 10 people): \$4 per person
KeyBank Room Rental (1st Floor, up to 20 people): \$50 fee
Main Training Room Rental (2nd Floor with elevator access, up to 80 people): \$100 fee
Basement Room Rental: (with elevator access, up to 40 people) \$75 fee

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Communications People Inc.*

MISSION STATEMENT: The Museum of disABILITY History advances the understanding, acceptance and independence of people with disabilities. The Museum's exhibits, collections, publications, archives and educational programs create awareness and a platform for dialogue and discovery.

