



# MOVING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK

MEMBER NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE MUSEUM OF DISABILITY HISTORY

WINTER 2016: VOLUME 16



## In Celebration of Down Syndrome

By Dave Mack-Hardiman, Associate Vice President, People Inc.



Born with an extra chromosome, the lives of people who have Down syndrome will be celebrated in an exciting new exhibit at the Museum of

disABILITY History. Opening in May of 2016, the exhibit will be supported by a generous donation from the Down Syndrome Parents Group of Western New York, Inc.

Examining the historical myths and facts surrounding this condition, the exhibit features portrayals of Down syndrome in popular culture, as well as stories of successful employment. Memorabilia which was generously donated by actor

Chris Burke – popularly known as Corky Thatcher from the television series *Life Goes On* – will be on display.

The beautiful photography of Eva Snoijink from the Netherlands will also be on display, along with paintings from local artists who have Down syndrome. In addition, Dr. David Wright, professor of history at McGill University in Montreal, Canada will present. Dr. Wright is the author and co-editor of eight books, including, *Downs, The History of a Disability* and (with the late Roy Porter, eds.) *The Confinement of the Insane, 1800- 1965: International Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Dr. Wright’s book about Down syndrome is a dramatic story of how lives have been

transformed by social change and scientific discovery. He writes, “Only in adulthood does one have the distance and maturity to reflect upon a family history that was, in many respects, far from ordinary, or on the role that mothers and fathers had as accidental advocates of disabled children, challenging pre-existing barriers of discrimination that yielded only slowly and over time to respect and integration.”

More than 350,000 Americans have Down syndrome and it is clearly one of the most recognizable chromosomal conditions in the world. This fascinating, one-of-a-kind exhibit is not to be missed. See you in the spring!



*Dominique, seven years old. Used by permission of Eva Snoijink, photographer, from the book, Down’s Upside – A Positive View of Down’s Syndrome.*



*Check Presentation – Pictured L-R: Doug Farley, director, Museum of disABILITY History; Amy Monson, president, Down Syndrome Parents Group of Western New York; Jason Brydges, board member, Down Syndrome Parents Group of Western New York; and David Mack-Hardiman, associate vice president, People Inc.*

## Message from the Director



Welcome to 2016 and the Museum of disABILITY History! I hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Moving Forward/ Looking Back*.

We finished this past year with a flourish of activity and lots of holiday excitement! Our “Night of a Thousand Stars” GoFundMe fundraising campaign kick-off was a big success! We are thankful to campaign co-chairpersons Jeffrey and Katrina Zeplovitz. More event and fundraising details are included on page 5.

Other fall programs were also well received: Museum of disABILITY History Founder James M. Boles, EdD offered a very interesting program on his latest book entitled, *They Did No Harm: Alternative Medicine in Niagara Falls*. Special thanks to Dr. Boles for the many ways he continues to support our Museum! On November 6, we hosted a premiere for Rosanne Higgins’ third book, *The Seer and the Scholar*. The setting for the book series is a 19th century Erie County Poorhouse. Our second program in November was held in collaboration with Canisius College; humorist and storyteller Kevin Kling presented *Kevin Kling Live*.

December featured two fun holiday events: We welcomed the Aspire of WNY musical group, Universal Mind, on December 3. This was our third annual holiday musical

event, complete with dancing, refreshments and a neat holiday basket raffle. Special thanks once again to our members, Kathy Wood and Theresa Kolodziej, who gathered some great baskets for this year’s raffle. The second event was a new family friendly children’s event held December 12, entitled, “Mubu’s Family Holiday.” We were pleased to welcome *Mubu the Morph* and *Mubu’s Christmas* author Stephen Nawotniak and illustrator Jeffrey Scott Perdziak, along with a visit from Santa. Stephen read his latest story and Jeffrey drew free Mubu illustrations. Special thanks to the Amherst YES group for providing free face painting. We were pleased to co-host this event with local human service agencies Bornhava, People Inc. and Parent Network of Western New York.

We started out the new year with a new traveling exhibit. On January 7, we unveiled *Dr. Skinner: Disability Educator, Advocate and Abolitionist*. This exhibit was produced through a grant from the Niagara Falls Area National Heritage District. The new four panel exhibit’s first placement is Niagara Falls Public Library. Additional details are on page 3.

After more than two years of research and planning, our Museum’s latest publication, *Buffalo State Hospital: A History in Light and Shadow*, is now complete. This full color book includes a well-written history, amazing photos from our collection, several eye-witness accounts offered by former patients and employees, and more than 100 stunning images from the shuttered

institution as prepared by modern-archeological photographer Ian Ference. We held a special event to showcase the new book on January 23.

Making a return appearance in 2016, we are highlighting our signature exhibit, *The Lives They Left Behind: Suitcases From a State Hospital Attic*. This very popular exhibit helped to drive record visitation numbers last winter and we are bringing it to the forefront once again. We are very thankful to author Darby Penny for the amazingly generous donation of the exhibit to our Museum in 2015. Darby said she could think of no better place as a permanent home for this exhibit that has been seen by thousands of individuals around the country.

During your next visit to the Museum, be sure to take in the new short documentary film produced by local videographer Jon Hand. Now showing in our new theater, this 15-minute film gives visitors an overview and understanding of the importance of disability history presented at our Museum. We once again express our tremendous thanks to the Western New York Foundation for their grant of \$19,000, which helped repurpose two rooms into our experiential theater.

See you soon,



Doug Farley, Director  
Museum of disABILITY History



“ I thought the presentation by Rosanne Higgins was outstanding. Her enthusiasm about the subject just shines through! I have now read her book and found it very interesting. I’m happy to add it to my library. ”

- Joan D. Harms, supporter of the Museum of disABILITY History (Joan and her husband Bill attended our 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act event in April 2015.)

## Disability Advocate Angela (A.J.) Bray to Plan a Presentation

We were pleased to welcome Angela (A.J.) Bray, disability advocate, who visited our Museum of disABILITY History to plan for an upcoming program later in the year. In addition to self-advocacy, A.J. has a long list of life accomplishments as an author and professional model. She was recently named Ms. Wheelchair Eastern USA for 2016.

A.J. received the “disabled” label as a child when she was diagnosed with bone and joint abnormalities including scoliosis and juvenile-onset poly-osteoarthritis. She was a wheelchair user by age 14. Despite a diverse assortment of physical disabilities, A.J. said she “never once felt it was an impediment to achieving my goals.” Those goals included successfully publishing short stories and two anthologies.

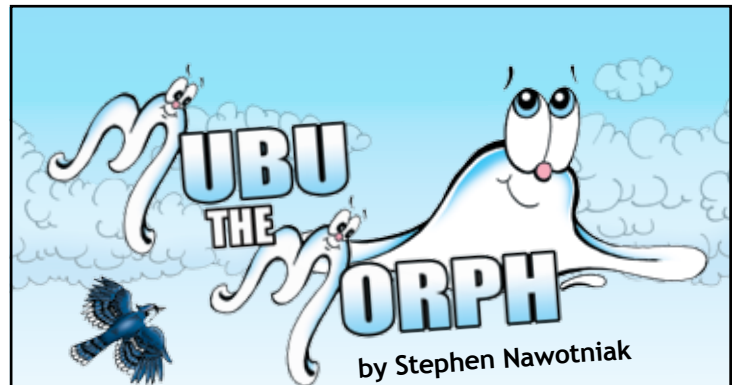
As an advocate, A.J. has served on the Niagara Falls Human Rights Commission, is a board member of Independent Living and works as a tireless advocate for individual rights guaranteed through the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for information about her presentation in 2016!

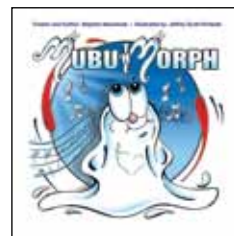


The Museum of disABILITY History’s newest traveling exhibit, *Dr. Skinner: Disability Educator, Advocate and Abolitionist*, was unveiled on January 7, at Niagara Falls Public Library, Earl W. Brydges Building 1425 Main Street, Niagara Falls, NY. The event included a presentation by James M. Boles, EdD, founder of the Museum of disABILITY History and author of *Dr. Skinner’s Remarkable School for Colored Deaf, Dumb, and Blind Children 1857-1860* and *They Did No Harm: Alternative Medicine in Niagara Falls, NY, 1830-1930*. He spoke about the history of Dr. Platt Skinner who established a school for African-American children with disabilities in the shadow of the suspension bridge in 1860.

The exhibit, produced through a generous grant from the Niagara Falls National Heritage Area, explores dozens of compelling and persuasive visual images. The Niagara Falls Public Library is serving as the first host for the Museum of disABILITY’s new traveling exhibit and will be on display until the end of March 2016.



Take children grades K-3 on a rhyming adventure with Mubu as he learns the secret to being his best self through trial and error.



**On Sale Now!**  
store.museumofdisability.org  
mubuthemorph.com

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

Proceeds benefit the Museum of disABILITY History

## New Introductory Movie Now Showing

The new documentary video at the Museum of disABILITY History is receiving favorable reviews from our visiting guests. Finished in September, the film is used to help orient all of our visitors to our Museum and its mission. The film was created by local videographer Jon Hand and tells several compelling stories. The history of institutionalization of people with disabilities is poignantly told in first-person by Maria Bell, one of our docents, who spent a large portion of her life living in an institution.

We recently hosted a group of students from the University at Buffalo MBA program and their comments were very encouraging:

“I found the intro video at the Museum of disABILITY History to be fascinating. From start to finish, the video was incredibly professional and beautifully directed. The speakers were all clear and articulate, while the imagery added great value to the experience. Starting the video off by challenging assumptions gives the video weight and captures the audience early. People are here to have their preconceived notions challenged, so this is a great choice. I also greatly enjoyed the part about terminology and how to expect language that may cause discomfort. Again, people are here to be challenged. Terminology is such an important part of how people are separated and marginalized these days, so addressing this issue will be fascinating to viewers. In addition, talking about the resources the organization offers is of great value. Many people may not know that this is more than just a museum - it is also a treasure trove of primary texts and photographs about disability history for research.”

- Chris Maino, University at Buffalo, MBA Class of 2017

“My favorite part was including the personal touch and personal story. Seeing the emotion in Maria’s eyes and then hearing how she lived through much of this history was touching, and brought the stories told back to reality. Her story also gave hope for the future, looking at how far the world has come, and thinking about what will be possible in years to come. Life for individuals with disabilities has changed as we know it and will continue to change for the better in the future. On a side note, I didn’t expect the screen to go up and show an example institutional room after the movie was completed. I absolutely love this idea! I think that sticks the most with us, because it is the horror of the past and the part everyone wishes they could change. I also find it the most interesting and walking through a sample room gives the visitors the ability to relate; and picture what 50 + years of life in such a small space would be like.”

- Amanda Dianetti, University at Buffalo, MBA Class of 2017

## Guest Contribution

### The Paradox of Happiness

By Aimee Levesque



“Your success and happiness lies in you. Resolve to keep happy, and your joy and you shall form an invincible host against difficulties.” – Helen Keller

The other day when I was leaving a meeting, I overheard two young women talking about one of the meeting attendees, who just happened to be a person in a wheelchair. The

conversation played out something like this:

Girl 1: I don’t know how she can be so happy...

Girl 2: Who? The wheelchair girl? Yeah, I have no idea either.

Girl 1: She has to depend on people to do everything for her and it must make her depressed all of the time.

Girl 2: I bet it is a front – all of that happy. There is no way she can be. I feel sorry for her.

Girl 1: Yeah, me too. I wouldn’t be happy, that’s for sure.

Girl 2: Aren’t all of the disabled unhappy anyway? I mean, how could they not be? They are so different!

Since hearing this conversation, I have spent countless hours thinking about happiness and disability and why the idea of the two concepts are seen as polar opposites to those outside of the disability world (and truth be told, to some within). I’ve found myself questioning how it is that those who do not have disabilities seem to believe that they have the corner of the market on happiness and how this happiness is wrongly denied to those who just so happen to be a little different.

I have also tried to make sense of how this paradox came to fruition – albeit unsuccessfully – but personal reflection made me realize that the topic of happiness and disability is a great way to start a dialogue about the stereotypes that not only impact how people with disabilities are treated but also how they are perceived in society.

This odd paradox that exists when the words “disability” and “happy” are used in the same sentence grew thanks to false assumptions and perceptions. For many people, like the two girls I overheard, there is a societally learned sympathy for those who have a disability; some people cannot seem to understand how people with disabilities can have not only a productive life but also a happy one. Surely, those with disabilities may have experiences that are challenging but life satisfaction is a personal choice made by all of us regardless of level of ability or dependence.

Stereotypes about disability are deep-rooted concepts that are often triggered by fear, lack of understanding, and unfortunately, prejudice. They are non-productive misconceptions that serve only as barriers to acceptance and understanding. The idea of the depressed and proverbially sad person with a disability is one such stereotype that still exists and must be challenged. Having a disability does not mean an unhappy person or a poor quality of life but perpetuating stereotypes about disabilities can certainly provide barriers to those things.

*continued on page 6*

## GoFundMe Campaign Continues

On October 3, 2015, our GoFundMe fundraising campaign was launched during an exclusive kick-off event, “Night of a Thousand Stars.” With more than 50 guests in attendance, it was a great night of food, drink and a silent auction. Campaign co-chairpersons Jeffrey and Katrina Zepowitz did an outstanding job getting the ball rolling on our fundraising campaign, providing a new source of revenue. To date, donations totaling more than \$9,000 have been raised.

The campaign received national attention through social media, garnering support from celebrities, including Maria Shriver, activist, journalist and author; and Diane English, producer, director and native Buffalonian best known for creating the hit television show *Murphy Brown*.

Additional stars showed their support through promotional videos, including William Fichtner, Buffalo-born actor and screenwriter; Chris Burke, actor who played Corky on *Life Goes On* and Goodwill Ambassador for the National Down Syndrome Society; and Brian Donovan, *Kelly’s Hollywood* film creator.

Several generous donations were also made. Burke contributed memorabilia for the silent auction and items for a future Museum exhibit. Jeffrey and Katrina donated a cheerleading costume, which was worn by actress Lauren Potter, who played Becky on the popular television show *Glee*.

Funds from the ongoing campaign will benefit our experiential movie theatre and interactive exhibit. To learn more, watch the videos and to donate, visit [gofundme.com/musedisability](http://gofundme.com/musedisability).



*L-R: Dave Mack-Hardimann, associate vice president for People Inc. and the Museum of disABILITY History, and Museum of disABILITY History GoFundMe Campaign co-chairpersons Jeffrey and Katrina Zepowitz, who donated a cheerleading costume worn by actress Lauren Potter, who played “Becky” on the television show Glee.*



*Congressman Brian Higgins with Ed Rutkowski, former player for the Buffalo Bills.*



continued from page 4

In my world, most, if not all (I am a realist so I will err on the side of caution), of the folks that I know who have a disability are happy and lead productive, positive and satisfied lives. They are married. They have children. They have friends. They have hobbies. They are active community members. They work. They play. They live happily. Why? Well, quite simply, it is because they choose to.

Happiness is not an exclusive club for some – happiness is for ALL. Your life will be as happy (or as unhappy) as you want it to be, regardless of level of ability. The choice is yours; it's really that simple! So as we embark upon a new year filled with potential and promise, I thought it would be a great time to shatter the disability-happiness paradox and to provide a few suggestions on how any human can be happier in their day-to-day lives!

**1. Embrace who you are.** You are one of a kind! How awesome is that? Sure, we all have moments where we feel uncomfortable in our own skin or wish we were someone else but if we embrace who we are, loving all of our flaws as well as the things that make us different from each other, we can be (and are!) happier in our lives. So be kind to yourself; show self-love and acceptance.

**2. Surround yourself with positive people.** It may sound cliché but the old adage is true – if you associate with those who are happy and upbeat, you will also feel the same way. Be on the lookout for folks who wish you the best and are genuinely happy for your successes – they will be the ones to lift you up and support you and will also be the ones who have their own happy lives!

“Happiness is not an exclusive club for some - happiness is for ALL.”

**3. Volunteer.** There is nothing more rewarding than helping other people, so get out there and volunteer! Help out in a nursing home. Visit veterans at the hospital. Donate items to a clothing drive. Feed the hungry. Doing things outside of the self can be extraordinarily rewarding!

**4. Get Moving!** Get that body moving and get that blood flowing – both of which will result in the release of those sweet endorphins that result in happy hormones! Go to the gym. Take a walk outside in the fresh air. Not into exercising outside of the home? That's okay, too! There are plenty of things you can do in the comfort of your own home that will help you get your body in motion. The point is, simply, to get moving!

**5. Do the Things that You Love.** Whether you enjoy painting pictures or playing video games, whenever you have spare time (and even if you don't – make time for fun!) make sure that this time is filled with things that make you happy.

**6. Laugh and Smile.** Often. Have you ever been in a bad mood but then had someone smile at you and your day did a total turnaround?! Laughter and smiles are wonderfully contagious, so spread them far and wide!

Here's to a prosperous 2016. BE HAPPY!

*Aimee Levesque is Jessica's mom (her greatest role). She is also a PhD candidate in Curriculum, Instruction and the Science of Learning (CISL) in the Department of Learning and Instruction at the University at Buffalo; a professor in the Department of English at Buffalo State; an advocate and a writer.*



*Brendan Curry, participant of People Inc.'s Young Adult Life Transitions Program, enjoys working the register as part of his internship at the Museum of disABILITY History.*

## YALT Program Participants Gain Practical Skills

Students from People Inc.'s Young Adult Life Transitions Program recently began interning at the Museum of disABILITY History. This opportunity allows the students to build their vocational skills through various community experiences. Students have gained experience cashing people out, learning about programs and answering phones. When students were asked about their experiences they shared:

“The Museum is a great opportunity to practice using the cash register. I greet people when they come in and communicate with others. You can help people when they ask!”  
- Courtney Mergel

“I love talking to all the people. I enjoy working there.”  
- Halee Glanowski

“My favorite part of working at the Museum is when people come in and I get to greet them.”  
- Jenna Molle

## Buffalo State Hospital Book Now Available

By James M. Boles, Founder, Museum of disABILITY History, and Author

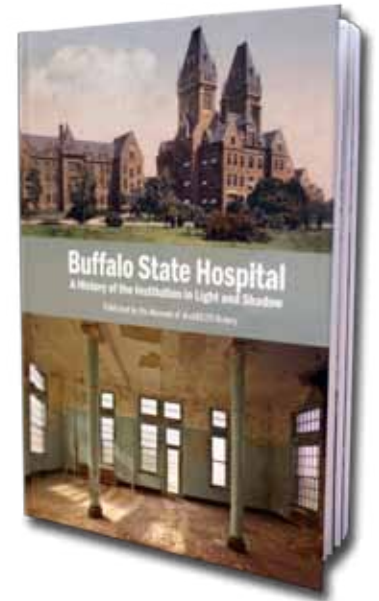


*Buffalo State Hospital: A History of the Institution in Light and Shadow*  
A one-of-a-kind, full color book includes amazing historical photos from our collection that shows an institution in transition. Learn more about the rare insights into this mental health institution as told by patients, employees and neighbors. More than 100 exclusive images are included from the shuttered institution as photographed by modern-archeological photographer Ian Ference.

This timely publication is a cooperative creation of the staff at the Museum of disABILITY History, under the leadership of Doug Farley and David Mack-Hardiman, with clear design organization by Rachel Bridges. The publication's rare collection of photographs recorded over many years is the foundation of the book, with a complete facility history and extensive interviews with former patients, their relatives, workers and neighbors.

The images in this book were captured at a time when caregivers were directed to quickly drop what they had tried in the past, and we are now allowed to view the wards that were locked away.

The Buffalo State Hospital is moving forward with the efforts of local businesses and political leaders as it becomes a hotel and museum. This book will give you an overview of its magnificent history and freeze time to examine that brief period when its history was cast aside.



*Photographs by Ian Ference*



The Museum of disABILITY History hosted a book launch for *Buffalo State Hospital: A History of the Institution in Light and Shadow*, on January 23. During the event, personal stories about the hospital were shared by Karl Shallowhorn, former patient, and Paul Shea, former employee. David Mack-Hardiman, associate vice president of People Inc., discussed the stigma of mental illness.

Books are available at our store at the Museum of disABILITY History, 3826 Main Street, Buffalo and online: [store.museumofdisability.org](http://store.museumofdisability.org)

## Film Screening of *Capturing Grace*

Saturday, March 12, 2016

Film to be shown at 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Reception at 5 p.m. for all attendees

Museum of disABILITY History, 3826 Main Street, Buffalo

*Capturing Grace* is a film about dancers with Parkinson's disease joining forces with a famed modern dance company to stage a unique performance. This is a story about two realms: One is occupied by some of the most acclaimed modern dancers in the world, while the other is inhabited by a group of people with Parkinson's disease. This film is about what happens when these worlds intersect.

Co-hosted by the Museum of disABILITY History and Danceability. Admission is free; donations accepted for the Museum of disABILITY History, Danceability and the National Parkinson Foundation WNY Chapter.

More details will be shared on our website and Facebook page.

To learn more or how to get involved, call 716.629.3626.



THERE ARE NO PATIENTS.  
THERE ARE ONLY DANCERS.

# CAPTURING GRACE

A film by David Iverson

"Dave Iverson is a masterful storyteller...*Capturing Grace* is a poignant reflection on the strength and resilience of the human spirit"  
Michael J. Fox

## Workshops and Educational Programming

In February, the Museum of disABILITY History hosted its second full-day workshop, "Tourette Syndrome and Associated Disorders in the Classroom." It was led by Susan Conners, MED, president and founder of the Tourette Syndrome Association of Greater New York State. The workshop was held in association with Learning Partners, which issues Continuing Education Units to licensed professionals in various fields.

To learn more about Tourette syndrome, check out Susan's book, *The Tourette Syndrome and OCD Checklist*, available at our Museum store. The Museum of disABILITY History is pleased to expand upon its educational programming. If you are interested in a certain topic or would like to recommend a speaker, contact Doug Farley, director, at [dfarley@people-inc.org](mailto:dfarley@people-inc.org) or 716.629.3626.

disABILITY Awareness and Etiquette

Remember that people with disabilities are not alike and have a wide variety of personalities and skills. We are *all* individuals.

The logo for the Museum of disABILITY History, featuring a stylized orange wheelchair icon and the text "Museum of disABILITY History" and "museumofdisability.org".



# The Importance of Being Present

## An Olmsted Story

By Marilyn Scattoreggio



After a few years of family, health and work crises that had my head spinning, and a geographical move of about 400 miles, I walked into the room not knowing what to expect. Heads turned towards me and I explained:

“I’m new to the area and a friend told me I should come by.” I was at the South West Regional Office Self Advocacy meeting.

I sat next to a gentleman who offered me a piece of paper and asked, “Hey, would you like to take minutes?” Well, I’d been doing just that for about 20 years and so I said, “Sure.”

The discussion was such that I could barely keep up; words shooting across the table like spears. At one point, a woman looked across the table to the man opposite her and said, “Can I run you over after the meeting?” Fundraisers were discussed, new issues brought up and there was a lot of laughter. My pen preserved for future reference every side comment, zinger and retort during those two hours; two of the fastest of my life.

When I arrived at the meeting the following week a bit late, there was an audible group exhale as I walked in. “You’re back!” one woman exclaimed, vocalizing what some others may have been thinking. “I thought maybe we scared you last week!”

“Au contraire!” I rejoined, as I passed out the newsletters. This time I had my iPad and, having been appointed plenipotentiary to the secretary of the South West Regional Office Crew Self Advocacy group, I started to record the minutes—something I have continued to do for nearly two years.

Many of these self-advocates were up and out before the sun was up, in all kinds of weather, some in wheelchairs, going to different activities, some working, others teaching or in other ways sharing their

knowledge and experience with people just becoming aware of the fact that their lives are just that: their own lives. I continued to attend, week after week, because I had found a place of welcome in my new hometown.

After attending meetings for a while, I went to the state convention with the group. By then, I’d surmised that there was a reason for the connection I felt to “the Crew” – my new friends, my first friends in Western NY. They were people who, like me years ago as a 19-year-old experiencing medical trauma, were trying to find and use their voices. That resonated with me.

I tried to imagine what it must be like, simply by virtue of having limited use of one’s extremities, to be denied the freedom to do as I please and live as I please. I wouldn’t stand for it. But many of my new friends (and their parents) had been told from the time they were young that this was the deal.

Passage of the Olmsted Act in 1999 changed those assumptions, but agencies and communities have been slow to recognize it and implement its requirements. And so the Self Advocacy movement grows. Things are changing, but not fast enough. People’s very lives are in some cases at risk due to the slowness of action on the part of those with the power to make things happen.

Reluctantly and to my eternal embarrassment, I admit it only recently occurred to me that before moving to Western New York, I’d never met anyone with a cerebral palsy or spina bifida, conditions experienced by two of my new friends. They didn’t go to the same schools as their peers who didn’t have those conditions.

And now I wonder: Why not? They’re smart, funny, and good decent people. In fact, I think they’re rather extraordinary people. I think, however, that the fact that they each have a disability isn’t what makes

them extraordinary. I believe each of them would have been extraordinary anyway. It’s just who they are. That first day when I attended that meeting and they invited me to take a place at their table, changed my life. I had to leave home in order to find my place, and my voice. As Robert Frost wrote, “Home is the place, that when you ...go there, they have to take you in.”

I wish I’d found them sooner. No wonder I didn’t find my voice until arriving at the meeting that day. An entire section of the choir was missing: My section, the place where my voice fit in. I’ve learned that it isn’t acceptance or permission or approval my friends are seeking. They just need

**“I wish I’d found them sooner. No wonder I didn’t find my voice until arriving at the meeting that day. An entire section of the choir was missing: My section, the place where my voice fit in.”**

barriers removed: natural barriers and the barriers erected by our culture that prevent them from participating – from working, visiting, shopping, playing – along with the rest of us.

I look forward to the day when all people are judged solely by their abilities and not by their limitations. Because society is not whole until all of us is present, accounted for, and heard. How many of us never will know what our lives might have been because we were incomplete and didn’t know it? We need to recognize that it is society that is imposing disability on otherwise able people, and we all are so much the poorer because of it.

i The Road Not Taken and Other Poems (Dover Thrift Editions) – April 19, 1993, by Robert Frost (Author); originally published in Mountain Interval by Robert Frost, H. Holt & Co., Publisher, 1916

*Marilyn Scattoreggio is a writer, wife, mother an advocate and is also a co-founder of Outside the Box Advocacy.*

## Support the Museum, Become a Member!

Want to support the Museum of disABILITY History? Membership opportunities are available! With five different levels available, you can choose the one that is right for you. All supporting membership levels are good for one year. **To become a member, call 716.629.3626 or log on to our website at [museumofdisability.org](http://museumofdisability.org).** Click on the "Support Us" tab, click on "Membership," and "Click Here to Become a Member." Thank you for your support!

## New Members!

A warm welcome to our newest members who recently joined and renewed:

### Individual/Student

Joan Barry  
Robert Bedigian  
Nancy Blumreich  
Chris Boles  
Dan Boles  
David Boles  
Shawna Boles  
Becky Burns  
Assemblywoman Jane Corwin  
Adrian Esposito  
Denise Godinez  
Karen Hoffman  
Helen McGreevy  
Karl Shallowhorn  
Char Szabo Perricelli  
Amherst Supervisor Barry Weinstein

### Family/Dual

Claudia Lee  
Robert Murrett  
Jesse and Mary Palumbo  
Alexandra Wehr  
Penny Zeplovitz

### Friend

Ann and James Burk  
Erie County Clerk Christopher Jacobs  
Kathleen Wood  
Fred Zazycki

### Sustainer

James M. Boles, EdD.  
Susan Mann Dolce  
Rhonda Frederick  
Lyn Kozlowski and Kate Wagner  
Nancy Palumbo  
Larry and Catherine Skerker

As a member, you receive free admission to the Museum and events, and a 10% discount in the Museum Store!

## Top 10 Reasons to Visit the Museum of disABILITY History

This past fall, Canisius College students of a class preparing for teaching special education toured our Museum. They shared reasons why other students should visit:

1. To learn how the language involving disabilities has changed.
2. To discover stories of people who experienced institutions/asylums.
3. To learn about the history of prosthetics.
4. To learn about the ideas surrounding Eugenics and examples throughout history.
5. To learn about Civil Rights.
6. To gain historical knowledge of disabilities in the United States and Europe.
7. To see "Becky," an adaptive Barbie doll.
8. To discover Archie comic book series.
9. To learn the stories of people with disabilities in sports and entertainment.
10. To develop empathy and sensitivity toward those with disabilities.



## Covering Western New York for Over 45 Years.

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11 Pinchot Court, Suite 100  
Amherst, NY 14228  
Office: 716.688.8888  
[www.vannerinsurance.com](http://www.vannerinsurance.com)

*The Museum of disABILITY History thanks Vanner Insurance Agency for their Annual Corporate Membership.*

# The Healing Sanitariums of Western New York

By James M. Boles, Founder, Museum of disABILITY History, and Corinne Lasek, Museum of disABILITY History

Before modern medicine discovered effective cures for the ills of mankind, a group of unique medical facilities flourished in Western New York, from the 18th well into the 20th century.

## The Health Spas of Alden, New York

Shortly after the discovery of black mineral water in 1891, Alden, New York became a town famous for its many bath houses and sanitariums. With promised favorable outcomes for rheumatism, nervous prostration, hysteria, alcoholism, nervousness, partial paralysis, and many other ailments, thousands of patients traveled to this small town in Western, New York to “take the cure.” The baths, reported as having high mineral levels consisting of chlorine, bromine, calcium, magnesium and a sodium content higher than sea water, operated for over 50 years, closing in the 1960s. The baths were seen as a treatment, not a cure, so patients would return for ongoing therapy to manage their disease. Mental health care was crude and seldom effective, and the baths and sanitariums were also used to care for diseases of the nervous system. At best, the facilities were a place to rest, often in a peaceful setting, to eat good food, and to have attention paid to your problems.

A legacy of special diets, herbal remedies, baths and fresh air treatments are still to be found at resorts and spas. Spa bath items, health foods, spring waters, teas, vitamins, minerals and health drinks are now found in most grocery stores.



Ladies Rest Room, Original Black Water Bath House, Alden, N.Y.



## Curator's Corner

By Doug Platt, Curator



**Happy Birthday “Poor Matt:”** One item from the Museum’s library is celebrating its 150th birthday this year: “Poor Matt or The Clouded Intellect” by Jean Ingelow, Author’s Edition, was published by Roberts Brothers, Boston in 1866.

Jean Ingelow (1820-1897) was an English poet and novelist, and in this work she introduces Matt, a young boy of about 12, who is described as a “natural.” “He’s a natural ma’am; he doesn’t know how to get into mischief like us that have sense.” Matt, an orphaned “idiot boy” is taken care of by kindly locals, but also suffers at the hand of the area’s “smartest” boy. Matt wants to meet and be with God, but is confounded in the story by the other characters who attempt to explain the world, life and death, and human nature in terms of a “God” he has trouble understanding. Matt eventually expires of exposure in a cave, while waiting for God to “take him.”

Ingelow’s “Poor Matt” is an interesting 150-year old piece of disability history that occurs at the intersection of religion, intellectual disability and inspirational literature.



Thank you to Baltimore City Department of General Services for displaying our traveling exhibit, “War and Disability.” It was displayed throughout this past November at their War Memorial.

The Museum of disABILITY History provides a variety of disability themed traveling exhibits available to rent for conferences, events, college and businesses locally and across the country. They can easily be shipped. For more information, send an email to [info@museumofdisability.org](mailto:info@museumofdisability.org) or call 716.629.3626.



## Disability Etiquette Programs Available

Host a disability and etiquette training for your staff – it’s a great learning opportunity for human resource professionals, medical and direct support staff, drivers and those who work in the transportation and retail fields. For more information, contact Doug Farley, director, at [dfarley@people-inc.org](mailto:dfarley@people-inc.org) or 716.629.3626.

### MUSEUM INFO

3826 Main Street, Buffalo NY 14226  
716.629.3626  
[info@museumofdisability.org](mailto:info@museumofdisability.org)  
[museumofdisability.org](http://museumofdisability.org)  
[store.museumofdisability.org](http://store.museumofdisability.org)

### MUSEUM HOURS

**Monday-Friday:** 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
**Saturday:** 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
**Sunday:** 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  
**Rental of the KeyBank Room** (1st Floor, up to 20 people): \$50 fee added to the total amount per person  
**Rental of the Main Training Room** (2nd Floor w/ elevator access, up to 80 people): \$100 fee added to the total amount per person



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### MISSION STATEMENT

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