Actress Jamie Brewer Visits Museum of disABILITY History

The Museum of disABILITY History was excited to welcome actress Jamie Brewer when she visited this past May! While in town as the keynote speaker for the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day Conference held in Niagara Falls, NY, Jamie stopped by to check us out. She received a tour of the Museum and met with staff.

A performer with a background in theatre, Jamie was born with Down syndrome. She is best known for her recurring roles in American Horror Story, an American anthology horror television series. She also appeared in episodes of Switched at Birth. In 2015, Jamie became the first woman with Down syndrome to walk the red carpet at New York Fashion Week. A promoter of global inclusion, she was the youngest to be elected President of the ARC of Fort Bend Chapter and is active with numerous non-profit organizations, including the American Association of People with Disabilities of the United States and National Down Syndrome Congress.

We were so happy to have Jamie visit and view the “In Celebration of Down Syndrome” exhibit, which includes a photo of her from New York Fashion Week.
Dear Supporters:

It has been a busy time at the Museum of disABILITY History! With several new films, publications and unique events, the Museum continues to receive new visitors while welcoming old friends.

In May, more than 130 people attended an event at the historic Gowanda’s Historic Hollywood Theater in Gowanda, NY, as the Museum went “on the road.” Showcasing the book from the Museum’s Abandoned History series, *J. N. Adam Hospital, Her Inside Voice*, by Char Szabo-Perricelli, a panel discussion was held on the stage of the partially renovated theater. The history of the J. N. Adam Campus was celebrated by several speakers. Those in attendance were encouraged to participate in further meetings to help shape the future of the long neglected buildings. The spirited dialogue drew concerned citizens from all over the southern tier.

The Museum was happy to host a children’s book signing for *Olivia The Bully* by Engelic Everett and film showings of *Diffability Hollywood* by Adrian Esposito. Both produced by local self-advocates, these events showcased their talents while sending strong messages about how people with disabilities seek to be treated and portrayed by the media.

While Engelic is taking Western New York by storm with her book promotions, Adrian featured the Museum of disABILITY History’s own Doug Platt throughout his new movie. We wish them continued success!

There are numerous other events to share with you so I will keep my words to a minimum and let “the pictures do the talking” throughout this newsletter. See you all again soon!

David Mack-Hardiman
Associate Vice President, People Inc. and the Museum of disABILITY History

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*Life, Animated Featured at Film and Speaker Series*

On April 28, the premiere of *Life, Animated* was featured at the Museum of disABILITY History Film and Speaker Series at North Park Theatre in Buffalo, NY. The event was a great success with nearly 200 people in attendance! The Academy Award nominated film tells the inspirational story of Owen Suskind, a young man with autism who was unable to speak as a child until he and his family discovered a unique way to communicate by immersing themselves in the world of classic Disney animated films.

The Museum of disABILITY History was happy to co-present this event with Autism Services, Inc. of Western New York. Following the film, there was a short panel discussion with participants from Autism Services, Inc. of WNY. Special thanks to Angela Christoforos of WIVB- TV Channel 4 for being our event emcee who shared her personal family story about supporting her brother, who has autism.

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Associate Vice President, People Inc. and the Museum of disABILITY History

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Panel discussion with participants from Autism Services, Inc. of Western New York; moderated by Tracy Panzarella, director of Clinical Services for Autism Services, Inc. of WNY.
**International Visitors**

On March 21, the Museum of disABILITY History welcomed a group of international visitors from the nation of Mongolia. Representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the Ministry of Health, the Autism Association of Mongolia and The Mongolian National University of Education toured the Museum. In addition, in true celebration of World Down Syndrome Day, Dr. Chultem Erdenchuluun, CEO of the D.S. Association of Mongolia, met with Amy Monson, president of the Down Syndrome Parents Group of Western New York, Inc.

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**Celebrating World Down Syndrome Day**

In recognition of March 21 as World Down Syndrome Day, the Museum of disABILITY History welcomed family members of the Down Syndrome Parents Group of Western New York. They viewed the Museum’s “In Celebration of Down Syndrome” exhibit and enjoyed spending time together.

Amy Monson (right), president of the Down Syndrome Parents Group of Western New York, and Erdenchuluun Chultem, CEO of the Down Syndrome Association of Mongolia, had the pleasure of meeting each other. It was a great way to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day!

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On July 8, Mohammed Saad, a disability rights activist from the nation of Saudi Arabia, visited the Museum with representatives from the Middle East Institute. In recent years, new adaptive technologies have been developed to allow people who are blind to fully utilize smart phones, tablets and computers. But for Saad, there was a problem with these new programs. None of the apps designed to assist people who are blind were available in his native language of Arabic. Saad, who has been blind since early childhood, shared his story of how he has creatively transformed the available technology to design practical solutions for himself and others in his community. With audience participation, he demonstrated photography and money recognition technology. A reception was held for the visitors following the event.
Success Continues for Six Guys, 6,000 Miles

In August 2016, the Museum of disABILITY History and Film and Speaker series featured, Six Guys, 6,000 Miles. The film chronicles a one-of-a-kind cross-country trip taken by four participants in People Inc.’s Guys Group, and two life quality coaches. Since the event, the documentary has been entered into numerous film festivals and featured at various events. Here are some achievements that we are proud of:

• It has been two years since the group took their trip and a year since the documentary was created. Two of the participants, Jon Caldwell and Nick Feeterman, have been discussing plans to take another trip to California in 2020.
• The film was featured in the Love International Film Festival, held July 18-22 in Beverly Hills, CA, where it was nominated for “Best Documentary.”
• Six Guys, 6,000 Miles has been featured at a variety of film festivals, including Buffalo Dreams Fantastic, Canadian Diversity, Docs Without Borders Film Festival and IMPACT DOCS Awards. The film won “Best Featured Documentary” in the Canadian Diversity and IMPACT DOCS Awards Festivals. During the Buffalo Dreams Fantastic Film Festival, the film was named “Best Family Feature” and was also nominated for the “Best Western New York Feature Film.”
• This September, the film will be played at the Buffalo Niagara International Film Festival. For more info, go to thebnff.com.

DVDs of the award-winning film have been sold all across the country. They are for sale at the Museum of disABILITY History store, 3826 Main Street, Buffalo, NY, and online, store.museumofdisability.org. The video is available to rent or buy online at vimeo.com/181061451. To arrange a screening of the film, email info@museumofdisability.org or call 716.629.3626. Updates are periodically posted on the “Crossing Borders WNY” Facebook page.

Cemetery Restoration - Of Grave Importance

By David Mack-Hardiman, Associate Vice President, People Inc. and the Museum of disABILITY History

For the past eleven years, volunteers from the Museum of disABILITY History and People Inc. have cared for several abandoned or neglected institutional cemeteries. In 2006, employees from People Inc. discovered more than 400 graves at the Jolls Road Cemetery in Perrysburg, the majority of which were unmarked. This area contains the remains of former residents of the J.N. Adam Developmental Center, the Gowanda Psychiatric Center and the Western New York Developmental Disabilities State Operations Office. A Ceremony of Remembrance was held in October of that year where a monument was unveiled.

In 2007, volunteers worked at the Gowanda Psychiatric Center Cemetery on Route 62. The group meticulously recorded and cleaned 550 gravestones. A Jewish section of the cemetery, previously sunken, was restored. A Ceremony of Remembrance was held in September of that year, at which time a new sign and monument dedicated to the residents were unveiled.

For three years, People Inc. and Museum volunteers worked at the Wheater Road Cemetery in the town of Collins, where more than 1,200 residents are buried. More than 500 sunken gravestones were raised and hundreds of cast iron grave markers were straightened. A memorial garden was installed in this collaborative effort with the Collins Correctional Facility. A Ceremony of Remembrance was held there in 2011.

Continued on page 6
Engelic Everett, 33, is committed to making the world a better place, especially for those with disabilities. She started her own company making shirts with positive messages, creating a brand and website based on advocacy. A recipient of People Inc.’s services, Engelic lives and thrives with Down syndrome. For the past seven years, she has volunteered her time to present at People Inc. employee training sessions, explaining how to help people follow their dreams.

Engelic is a published playwright and performer. In October 2016, she earned the Museum of disABILITY History’s inaugural Chris Burke Award for Excellence in Disability Advocacy, and is also featured within the Museum’s “In Celebration of Down Syndrome” exhibit.

One cause that is important to Engelic is bullying awareness and prevention. She recently wrote a children’s book which incorporated these themes, called *Olivia The Bully*. The book, published by the Museum of disABILITY History, is available for sale at our store. We were so happy to host a book launch this past May, where Engelic read the book aloud to many supporters.

To learn more about Engelic, here is a Q&A:

**You’re a very open-minded person. Do you talk with people about your disability?**

**Engelic:** I am not ashamed to talk about my disability, which is Down syndrome. I know that I am a unique person just the way I am. All you have to do is look at me as a person behind my disability; once you get to know me, you will love me.

**Why do you enjoy writing?**

**Engelic:** I love writing – it’s my passion. The first play I wrote is called *Respect*. The main character in the play has a developmental disability. The reason why I decided to write it that way is because I believe that some people treat people with developmental disabilities unfairly.

I wrote another play named *What IF!* with the Unique Theatre Company, which was performed in December 2016. In February 2017, I also performed in People Inc.’s Arts Experience’s (a fine arts day habilitation program) musical presentation called *Tune Travel*.

**Your newest endeavor is the children’s book, *Olivia The Bully*. In the book, Olivia, who is a rabbit (your favorite animal) begins to discuss this topic with fellow animals at a very early age. Why did you write this book?**

A cause that is important to me is bullying awareness and prevention. My belief is that bullying is a serious topic that needs to be heard. The book teaches the values of friendship, understanding and loving one another – these are all things that are important to me!

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**Available to Purchase**

*Olivia The Bully*
Written by Engelic Everett, Illustrated by Jeffrey Scott Perdziak

- Museum of disABILITY History Store: 3826 Main Street, Buffalo, NY
- store.museumofdisability.org
- Amazon.com
- Monkey See, Monkey Do Children’s Bookstore, 9060 Main Street, Clarence, NY
Curator’s Corner: Outside the Gallery
By Doug Platt, Museum Manager and Curator

The gallery of the Museum of disABILITY History is the place where visitors get a chance to explore the rich history of individuals with disabling conditions and the ways society has interacted with them. One example is when we recently hosted 50 fifth graders from Elmwood Village Charter School to augment the unit on Disability Awareness they were studying in class. Visitors generally remark on the depth of the experience and information found inside. The Museum also has an impact outside the walls of the gallery.

Our traveling exhibits have been displayed over the last few months in universities and colleges and organizations in Florida; Massachusetts; Albany, NY; Indiana; Bath, NY; Texas and the Evansville African-American Museum and Evansville, In.

With the help of Brian Porebski, PT, DPT, ATP, of People Inc.’s Elmwood Health Center, and our docent Charles Degraffenried, 80 University at Buffalo Occupational Therapy students were given an overview on rehabilitative services and a disability etiquette presentation. A teacher from the Virginia School for the Blind recently called about using a lesson plan from our educational resources found on our website in his classroom. Our social media platforms continue to grow and are attracting authors, scholars, everyday folks and the occasional Hollywood actor or two.

Our gallery may be small, but our footprint and presence continues to grow outside the Museum’s building walls.

In 2012, volunteers turned their efforts toward the long abandoned cemetery at the Niagara County Almshouse. For the entire summer, the volunteers trimmed trees, cut vines and removed weeds to open up pathways. A memorial garden was created and an inscribed granite bench was installed. A beautiful ceremony was held there in October of that year.

In 2013, the Town Historian of Leicester requested the assistance of People Inc. and the Museum at the Craig Colony Cemetery in Sonyea. Volunteers began the task of cleaning each individual stone by hand, carefully removing dirt, lichen, mildew and years of neglect. This work continued throughout the summer of 2014 and almost half of the more than 2,000 gravestones have been cleaned.

In June of 2014, the Niagara County Legislature presented honorary recognition to the Museum of disABILITY History for the work at the Niagara County Almshouse Cemetery.

In July of 2014, Monument for the Forgotten, a mosaic of photographs of individual institutional graves was unveiled at the Museum of disABILITY History. This unique creation from Faces of Buffalo is the centerpiece in an extensive exhibit which traces the history of institutional cemetery restoration on national, state and local levels.

In January of 2017, the Museum of disABILITY History was awarded a Community Leader Award in the Arts by the National Federation for Just Communities of Western New York, Inc. This nomination was, in part, in recognition for these cemetery efforts. In addition, these efforts will be acknowledged as part of a documentary being produced by Julie Casper Roth of Albany.

This summer, volunteers from People Inc.’s Park Place Day Habilitation tended the monuments at Jolls Road and Route 62. Volunteers from People Inc. and the Museum went to the Wheeler Road Cemetery and the Niagara County Almshouse Cemetery. They weeded, trimmed trees and vines and planted flowers. Special thanks to the program participants and staff of People Inc. from 4286 Delaware Avenue, Park Place Day Hab, the LEAP Program and employees from People Inc.’s Training Department and Residential Services and Museum staff. Your dedication to this honorable cause is truly appreciated.
The Insane Asylum in the Eighth Judicial District,” as this proposed State Hospital was titled in state documents, almost ended up in Lockport, NY. A well-supported lengthy proposal was submitted in 1869 by a local committee comprised of James Jackson, Jr., T. T. V. Cuyler, A. F. Brown, S. W. Marks and John Hodge. At a common council meeting of the City of Lockport, held October 11, 1869, the resolution was passed supporting the establishment of a Lockport Asylum.

Resolved, that this council will join the board of supervisors of Niagara County in applying to the Legislature of this State, immediately after the opening of its next session, for authority to purchase and donate to the State of New York, for the purposes of an Insane Asylum, such property as the committee for the purpose may select in the vicinity of this city, provided that the city share of the expense thereof shall not exceed $30,000.

The major specifications were location, number of acres, quality of soil and water supply. This Asylum was to be a working farm, so good farm land and water were of concern.

The Lockport Committee’s proposal, which presented the Ira Farnworth Farm, strongly stressed the quality of the 300 acres of land, an abundance of springs on the property, the nearby Rogers Spring and 25 acres of wood land. Also highlighted was the Erie Canal bordering the property and a dock was suggested for shipping and receiving supplies. Much of the application was devoted to the excellent fruit that is grown in the county, the clean air, pure water, the well-built stone buildings on the site and the abundance of stone nearby. The Lockport document contrasted this with the noise, water and air quality of an urban site.

During a recent visit to the house and farm, I discussed the history of the Lockport Insane Asylum with homeowner, Cindy Kurk-Gerspach. This was my third visit to the estate, as I had seen it in the 1960s and in 2008. Cindy and her husband, Glen, have done a beautiful job restoring the abandoned house, now known by its former name, the Mount Providence Mansion. Cindy said that she was not surprised by the new information as she learns more history about the house every day. She had been working hard to get the house on the National Register of Historic Places, a designation it received in 2015, and felt that the house, its location and the large 300 acre farm on the canal, would have been an ideal location for the proposed Asylum.

As noted, ample spring water was one of the selling points of the Farnsworth Estate. I talked with John K. Hall, the patriarch of the Hall Apple Farm, about the springs on the property. He said, “There was a lot of water and sink holes caused by the springs eroding the soil on the farm roads. They had to add an extra horse in earlier times to pull out the wagons. Later, we used two tractors – one to pull the other out of the holes.”

Despite the thorough application and the then-current preference for rural settings, the Lockport Insane Asylum was overshadowed by the 203-acre Buffalo building site known as Clintons Lot, where the Insane Asylum of the Eighth Judicial District was finally built. The Buffalo State Hospital opened in 1880, serving both Niagara and Erie Counties.

Special thanks to Cindy and Glen Gerspach, the Niagara County Historian’s Office and John K. Hall for their assistance.
Individual Achievement from the Museum Association of New York

We're proud to share that David Mack-Hardiman, associate vice president for People Inc. and the Museum of disABILITY History, was presented with the Award of Merit 2017 for Individual Achievement from the Museum Association of New York. David earned the award after being nominated by Pam Bennett, mom of artist Bailey Bastine, whose artwork exhibit titled “The Unspoken Voice” was displayed at the Museum of disABILITY History.

Disability Etiquette Programs Available

Host a disability and etiquette training for your staff – it’s a beneficial learning opportunity for human resource professionals, medical and direct support staff, drivers and staff who work in the transportation retail fields. For more information, email info@museumofdisability.org or call 716.629.3626.

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A portion of the nomination read: “For the first time ever, Bailey was feeling comfortable and interacted with David Mack-Hardiman as he seemed to know how to reach her humor and connect with her through the many meetings she was a part of…. We felt respected as we got to know what this Museum was all about. My daughter’s exhibit spring-boarded her into a life filled with potential.”

Congratulations to Dave for being an ambassador for people with developmental disabilities.

Pam and Bailey Bastine

Proceeds benefit the Museum of disABILITY History
Smile Day at the Museum Health Fair with University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine was held at the Museum of disABILITY History in March. After the event, we were happy to receive this message:

“Many thanks for being so supportive, patient and helpful with our American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD) Chapter from day one. We would like to extend our gratitude to you and your amazing staff for making ‘Smile Day at the Museum Health Fair’ possible. We look forward to collaborating with you in the near future. Today represented that alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much!”

- American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry (AADMD) Chapter, University at Buffalo

The Museum of disABILITY History team had the opportunity to meet many people, share information and feature store items at the Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day Conference in May at The Conference & Event Center Niagara Fall in Niagara Falls, NY. Some of the top items sold were the *Six Guys, 6,000 Miles* DVD, *Olivia The Bully* children's book written by Engelie Everett and *The Legend* CD by Avery Gill. If you are interested in having various store items to be sold at your event, email info@museumofdisability.org or call 716.629.3626.
Support the Museum, Become a Member!

Want to support the Museum of disABILITY History? Membership opportunities are available! With different levels, 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. Click on the “Support Us” tab, choose “Membership” and “Click Here to Become a Member.” Thank you for your support!

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

**Individual/Student**
Robert Bedigian  
Edward Bennett  
Sindoor Desai  
Sujeet Desai  
Denise Godinez  
Barbara Guancial  
Barbara-Jo Hard  
Karen Hoffinan  
Assemblyman Michael P. Kearns  
Patricia Kibler-Fries  
Theresa Kolodziej  
Esther Owens  
Jesse Palumbo  
Assemblymember Crystal Peoples-Stokes  
Steven Perlman  
Linda Siragusa  
Joyce Sirianni  
Sue Spindler  
Mary Stang-Cooke  
Marcangelo and Char Szabo-Perricelli

**Friend**
Allied Mechanical  
Don Bach  
Robert Dunford  
Dr. David Gerber  
Suzanne Laba  
Fran Odette  
Senator Mike Ranzenhofer  
Jeff and Trudy Sanderson  
Donald Traynor  
Kathleen Wood  
Penny and Barry Zeplowitz

**Sustainer**
Dr. James and Paige Boles  
Rhonda Frederick  
Susan Mann-Dolce  
Nancy Palumbo

**Corporate**
First Light Home Care  
Vanner Insurance Agency

**Family/Dual**
Christopher Boles  
Dan Boles  
David Boles  
Shawna Boles  
Roger and Linda Covell  
David and Kathy Greenfield  
Patricia Jaramillo  
Claudia Lee  
Dr. Brian and Jennifer Masciadrelli  
Joan Murray  
Robert and Judith Murrett  
Nora and Matthew Plizga  
Fran and Judy Poitras  
Howard and Valerie Rosenhoch  
Margaret Zak

Edward’s DIFFability

*By Jeff Dulina\nka, Jr., Marketing Communications Intern, People Inc.*

Edward Barbanell is an American actor made famous for his role as Billy in the comedy, “The Ringer.” Edward lives with Down syndrome, but he does not let a disability get in the way of big dreams. Edward uses his fame to help Spread the Word to End the Word, a national campaign which fights to stop the usage of the “R-word.”

According to an interview with LAist, a website featuring Los Angeles-related news, Edward started his career as a stage performer in Florida’s Youth Theater, located in Boca Raton. After watching one of his performances, Acting Coach Ron Lane offered to work with Edward and help him through any challenges he might face becoming an actor. With this newfound direction in his career, Edward was on the road to achieving great things.

“The Ringer” movie features actor Johnny Knoxville as the main character who plans to enter the Special Olympics because he needs to pay for medical expenses for one of his best friends. During his time at the Special Olympics, Knoxville’s character meets many people with disabilities and becomes very close friends with them, shedding light on the fact that people who have disabilities are no different than people who aren’t disabled. On the set of the movie, Edward became best friends with Knoxville, and the two have been extremely close ever since. Knoxville invited Edward to make an appearance on the film “Jackass 3D” and also attend the premiere.

Edward has been very open about his disapproval of the “R-Word.” In an interview with Spread the Word to End the Word, Edward exclaimed: “Why would you say something that would hurt people?” Edward has also shared how he thinks people with disabilities should be treated: “Talk to them, be their friend, love them, hug them, do anything to raise their spirits, it’s like God taking something away from them in one area and making them extraordinary in other areas…Don’t call us people with disabilities… we have DIFFabilities!”

Edward is proof that no matter what life throws at you, you can still achieve your biggest dreams and have some fun along the way.
Traveling Exhibits Available
The Museum of disABILITY History is pleased to host a number of popular traveling exhibits, which have drawn big crowds in other parts of the country. Recently, the “Reel Life: disABILITY Goes to the Movies” exhibit was displayed at Miami-Dade College Medical Library in Miami, Fl. The exhibit summarizes how many motion pictures have been made that include disability themes or actors with disabling conditions. Over the years, actors portraying characters with disabilities have increasingly been the recipients of the Academy Award for Best Actor. This three-panel banner stand exhibit features some notable and award winning films and actors from the 1930s to 2010.

Our traveling exhibits are available to rent and can be shipped directly to your organization for conferences and events. For more information on renting a traveling exhibit, send an inquiry to info@museumofdisability.org or call 716.629.3626.

Museum of disABILITY History
Traveling Exhibits Available

- African-Americans and the Disability Experience: From Colonial Times, Desegregation, Advocacy and Achievement
- In the Game: Sports and Disability
- The Kennedy Connection
- Little Differences: The Portrayal of Children with disABILITIES Throughout History
- Madness in America: A History of Mental Health
- Moving Forward, Looking Back
- Dr. P.H. Skinner: Local Disability Educator, Advocate and Abolitionist
- The Quest for the Cure: Polio in America
- Reel Life: disABILITY Goes to the Movies:
- Self-Advocacy: A History of People Speaking Up for Themselves
- War and Disability

The exhibit, featuring vibrant multimedia and Hollywood memorabilia, explores medical history, myths and facts, success stories and popular culture.

Thank you Down Syndrome Parents Group of Western New York, Inc. for your support of the development of this exhibit.

3826 Main St, Buffalo, NY 716.629.3626 • museumofdisability.org

The exhibit is supported by a grant from the New York Council for the Humanities

CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY
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
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

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.

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