

# Give Ability A Chance

National's Services  
to Its Affiliates



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## To show you what we've been doing for the last 75 years, here are three perfect examples.

The definition of what Easter Seals does comes in as many shapes and sizes as people and their disabilities do. That's why Amanda, Cristy, and Brandy Jones make such a fitting picture. These 10-year-old triplets were born with varying degrees of disabilities, ranging from cerebral palsy, to motor, speech, and visual impairments. Brought to



Easter Seals for a pre-school program, they received the different amounts of occupational, physical and speech therapies they needed. Helping people make the most of their abilities is what Easter Seals is all about. Which is why today, Amanda, Cristy and Brandy are just the three active fifth graders they should be. *Give Ability A Chance.*

PARADE'S SPECIAL

# INTELLIGENCE REPORT®

Because of volume of mail received,  
Parade regrets it cannot answer queries

## Busy Year Ahead for Easter Seal Triplets



Brandy, Amanda and Cristy Jones (l-r):  
Sorry, Bill—they want to meet Reba

**T**he 1994 National Easter Seal Society child will be announced on Nov. 19. And, for the first time in the 75-year history of the society, its "child" will in fact be triplets. Amanda, Brandy and Cristy Jones of Benton, Ark., will travel widely in the next year, appear on the Easter Seal Telethon in March and meet a fellow Arkansan—President Clinton.

The triplets were born 10 years ago—2½ months prematurely. Amanda was diagnosed with cerebral palsy

at 7 months, after a referral to the Arkansas Easter Seal Society's early intervention program. She has had five years of occupational, speech and physical therapy.

Before her first birthday, Cristy was diagnosed with difficulties in motor skills, visual perception and speech. She attended the Easter Seal preschool program in Little Rock with Amanda. She also received four years of speech and occupational therapy.

Brandy was born with bowed legs and has had three years of occupational and physical therapy. She now shows no sign of disability. All three are in fifth grade at the school near their home in Benton.

Though not yet officially announced, the triplets have been on the go. They made their first plane trip together—to California to meet Pat Boone, host of the Easter Seal Telethon, and co-hosts Mary Frann and Robb Weller. They also visited the cast of TV's *Evening Shade*, set in Little Rock, and appeared as extras in a party scene. Their biggest wish now is to meet Reba McEntire, their favorite singer.



CONTACT: Sara Brewster, asst. v.p.  
Corporate Communications  
312.726.6200  
312.551.7141

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For immediate release: Nov. 19, 1993

**Little Rock's Amanda, Brandy and Cristy Jones are National Easter Seal Society's 1994 Child Representatives**

(Chicago. Nov. 19) For the first time in its 75-year history, the National Easter Seal Society has chosen triplets as its 1994 child representatives.

Ten-year-olds Amanda, Brandy and Cristy Jones of Benton, Ark., were specially chosen to help Easter Seals celebrate its silver anniversary. As Easter Seal representatives, the Jones sisters will be advocates for Easter Seals' many programs and services designed to help people with disabilities achieve independence.

The Jones children were born in 1983, two and one-half months prematurely. At seven months, Amanda was referred by a pediatrician to the Arkansas Easter Seal Society's early intervention therapy programs after she was diagnosed with cerebral palsy. She then received five years of occupational and physical therapy for motor delays and speech/language services to help her speech develop. Later, Easter Seal staff helped Amanda become "one of the kids" by integrating her into her neighborhood school.

Amanda's sister, Cristy, was diagnosed with motor, visual perception and speech delays before her first birthday for which Easter Seals provided four years of occupational and speech language therapies. Easter Seals' outreach team also

(more)



**National Easter Seal Society**  
230 West Monroe Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60606  
312/726-6200 (Phone)  
312/726-4258 (TDD)

helped Cristy overcome her shyness and better adjust to the school environment through her attendance, with Amanda, at the Easter Seal Society's pre-school program in Little Rock. Brandy was born with bowed legs but, after three years of physical and occupational therapy, now shows no sign of any disability.

Today, the Jones children attend fifth grade at Angie Grant Elementary School in Benton where Cristy has made the honor roll. The family is part of the Arkansas Easter Seal Society's Medicare-supported after school child care program.

When not studying, the girls pose something of a "triple threat" in the sports arena. During the summer, Brandy and Cristy play softball. Last year, Amanda began participating in the Arkansas Special Olympics, excelling in bowling, gymnastics and wheelchair racing. Amanda and her dad also share a passion for NASCAR racing and professional wrestling.

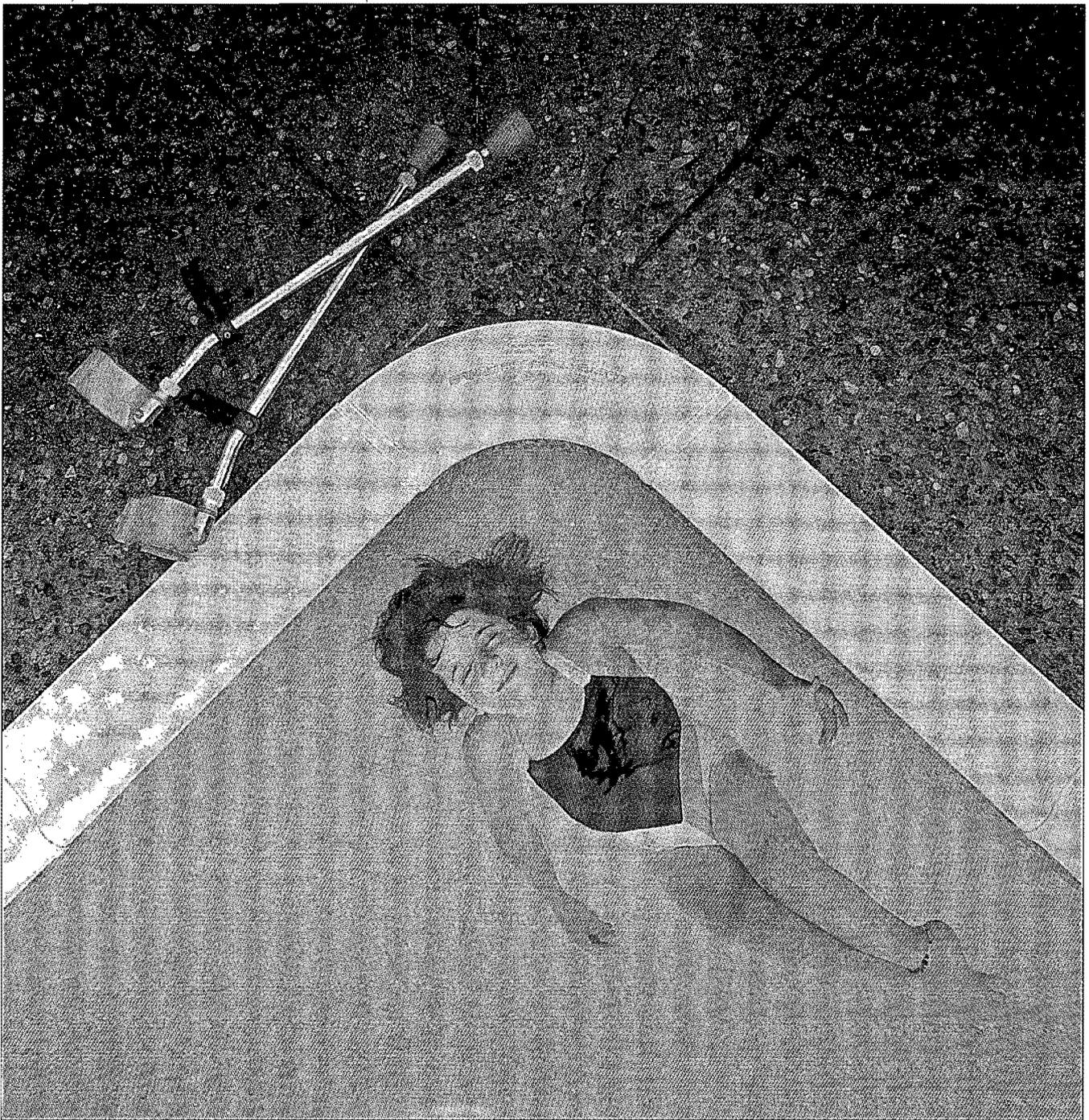
"They say there's a special bond among siblings who are twins or triplets," says Dana Jones, "and I'd have to say that's the case with our kids." "They support each other in every way," says Bruce Jones, "of course, that doesn't mean they don't get a severe case of sibling rivalry once in awhile, too."

(more)

When everyone's together, the Jones family often heads for their favorite shopping mall or restaurant with eight-year old sister Emily in tow. As National Easter Seal Representatives, Amanda, Brandy and Cristy will enjoy many new experiences over the next year, including a television appearance on the 1994 Easter Seal Telethon, March 5 and 6, 1994, and a meeting with the President of the United States.

For 75 years, the National Easter Seal Society has championed the independence of people with disabilities through its quality rehabilitation services; camping programs; technological assistance; disability prevention, advocacy and public education programs. Easter Seals serves more than a million people each year through its network of 160 affiliates nationwide.

###



## She's never been the same since she went off the deep end.

When Colleen Flanagan discovered swimming, a wonderful thing happened. Because Colleen was born with a rare condition that affects her growth and makes her bones brittle, exercise is critical to her strength and development. Thanks



to an Easter Seal swimming program, she found something that not only benefits her physically; she found a place where she can use her abilities and really excel. Now, she makes a splash wherever she goes. *Give Ability A Chance.*



CONTACT: Sara Brewster, asst. v.p.  
Corporate Communications  
1.312.726.6200  
1.312.551.7141

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For immediate release: Nov. 19, 1993

**Massachusetts' Colleen Flanagan Named National Easter Seal Society's 75th Anniversary Youth Representative**

(Chicago. Nov. 19) Colleen Flanagan, 13, a vibrant cheerleading captain and star camper from Worchester, Massachusetts, is the National Easter Seal Society's 75th Anniversary Youth Representative. Her personal "just go for it" enthusiasm and positive attitude make her an effective advocate for all young people, with and without disabilities.

Colleen was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, which makes her bones brittle, easily broken and affects her growth. It has not stopped her.

Colleen Flanagan is the oldest of three children. Even with her fragile bones, the Flanagans have always treated Colleen just like their other children -- with the same expectations and responsibilities.

Colleen attends Cotting School in Lexington, gardens with her dad, plays ball with her siblings and, each summer, attends the Massachusetts Easter Seal Camp Agassiz. Gail Flanagan says that "When Colleen goes to camp, she has the time of her life. When she comes home, she's more independent than ever."

An active participant in Massachusetts Easter Seal swimming programs since age three, and an avid soccer and basketball player, Colleen has stayed strong through physical activity. As she says, "Swimming is my absolutely, positively, favorite thing to do."

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Her teachers say that her classmates look up to her because of her independence; her younger brother says he likes her because she's funny.

As the National Easter Seal Society's 1994 Youth Representative, Colleen Flanagan will address many of the issues that today's teens are dealing with from her unique perspective. Colleen will share her experiences as a young person with a disability who uses her intelligence, her leadership skills and humor to make a difference.

The National Easter Seal Society is a non-profit, community-based organization dedicated to helping people of all ages and disabilities achieve independence. Easter Seals' 160 affiliates serve more than a million people annually with quality rehabilitation services, technological assistance, prevention programs and public education campaigns.

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## When you don't know what's wrong, doing any job is a real trial.

Betsy Worstell had always loved her job as a court stenographer, until one day the effects of post-polio syndrome began to take their toll. A debilitating condition common to people who have had polio, it can make even simple tasks overwhelmingly fatiguing. Today, with physical



therapy and the help of Easter Seal support groups, Betsy has learned to work in new ways, using less energy. Helping people make the most of their abilities is what Easter Seals is all about. Fortunately for Betsy, that means she'll have her day in court. *Give Ability A Chance.*



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Corporate Communications  
1.312.726.6200  
1.312.551.7141

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For immediate release: Nov.19, 1993

**Denver Court Reporter Betsy Worstell Named  
1994 National Easter Seal Adult Representative**

(Chicago. Nov. 19.) Elizabeth (Betsy) Worstell is hard pressed to remember a time when Easter Seals hasn't been part of her life. The Denver resident, who is married, a mother of two, a foster mom to a third, and a court stenographer for the state of Colorado, has been chosen as the 1994 National Easter Seal Adult Representative. In this role, Betsy will serve as a spokesperson for Easter Seals and an advocate for people with disabilities.

Betsy was 2 1/2 when she contracted polio, and recently she has been experiencing the effects of post-polio syndrome. Easter Seals helped Betsy obtain her first set of leg braces when she was 4. Her earliest memories center around attending the Colorado Easter Seal Society's camp in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. She went to camp for 10 years. "I absolutely lived to go to Easter Seal camp," she said. "It was like a magical kingdom. When you went to camp, you found out that you really could do whatever you wanted to do." Since those early years, she has kept in touch with others she met at camp by attending camping reunions.

When she began experiencing the symptoms of post-polio syndrome, she turned to Easter Seals for help once again. Today she receives physical therapy services and participates in a post-polio support group at the Easter Seal Center in Lakewood, Colo.



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230 West Monroe Street  
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312/726-6200 (Phone)  
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earliest memories, it was also part of the lives of her entire family. Her mom and dad served on the board of directors of the Colorado Easter Seal Society, and her dad served on the board of directors of the National Easter Seal Society for 10 years. Both of Betsy's brothers worked as counselors at the Colorado Easter Seal camp and one brother served as camp director.

Betsy never let her disability stand in her way growing up and she doesn't let disability stand in her way since experiencing the late effects of polio. She makes breakfast for her husband and children, sees 9-year-old Nicholas off to school, arranges for the daytime care of 4 year-old Elizabeth and 2 1/2-year-old Gabriel, drives herself to work, puts in a full day as a court reporter for the state and county grand juries, and comes home to the myriad of things that must be done. She thrives on challenges in her personal and professional life and hopes to show by example that people with disabilities can lead full and independent lives.

Betsy looks forward to her year representing Easter Seals. "I want to tell people just how important Easter Seals was for me and how it helps people with disabilities and their families," she said.

The National Easter Seal Society is a non-profit, community-based health agency, dedicated to helping people of all ages and disabilities achieve independence. Through a nationwide network of 160 affiliates, Easter Seals serves more than 1 million people each year by providing quality rehabilitation services; camping programs; technological assistance; and disability prevention, advocacy and public education programs.



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**CONTACT:** Sara Brewster, asst. v.p.  
Corporate Communications  
312.726.6200

**For immediate release:**

**Easter Seals celebrates 75 years with its "Give Ability a Chance" public service advertising campaign**

(Chicago.) *Give Ability a Chance*, the National Easter Seal Society's 1994 75th Anniversary multi-media public service advertising campaign, celebrates the difference that Easter Seals' quality rehabilitation services and support programs have made in the lives of people with disabilities. The *Give Ability a Chance* campaign focuses on how Easter Seal services help people with disabilities achieve the independence they need to be included as equal participants in our society.

Academy Award-winning actor, writer and director Cliff Robertson narrates the television and radio public service announcements. Easter Seals' 1994 multi-media campaign builds on the organization's 75 year history of providing physical and occupational therapy programs, speech language services; technological assistance; prevention, advocacy and public education services to millions of Americans.

Founded in 1919 by businessman Edgar Allen, the National Easter Seal Society is the first organization established to help children and adults with disabilities. Seventy-

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Chicago, Illinois 60606  
312/726-6200 (Phone)  
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five years later, the national society has grown to include 160 affiliates operating 400 service sites throughout the 50 states, Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C.

Easter Seals has built a strong reputation for the quality of its rehabilitation programs, prevention and public education services. In 1992, for the fourteenth year in a row, the National Health Council named Easter Seals as the nationwide leader among its member organizations for the percentage of program dollars spent on direct client services: \$237,723,000 or 95 percent of total program expenses. That same year, for the eighth consecutive year, Easter Seal Societies reported serving more than one million people. 1992 revenues also show that Easter Seals income of \$335 million, up from \$313 million in 1991, reflects a continuing trend of steady growth.

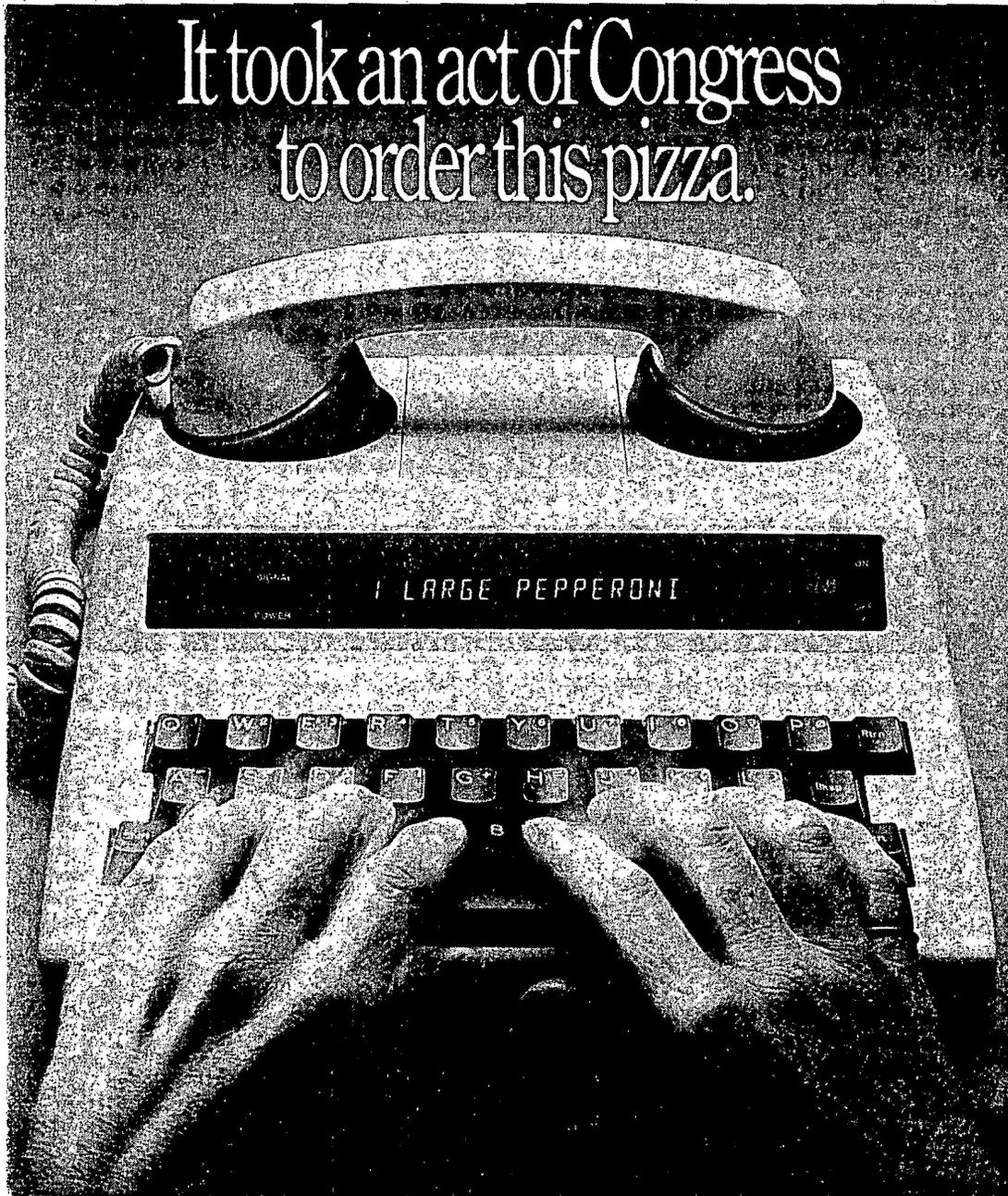
The national organization has been consistently cited for its strong record of fiscal responsibility and excellent management. *MONEY*, May 1993, mentioned Easter Seals among three non-profits that "spent its money wisely." In December 1991, *MONEY* listed Easter Seals first among voluntary health agencies in its list of the nation's top 10 non-profit organizations noting that donors benefit when 90 percent of all dollars raised are spent to provide direct services in their communities.

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Until recently, if you had a hearing disability, you couldn't call anyone who wasn't equipped with a special phone. But now, thanks to the Americans with Disabilities Act, phone companies furnish relay services to anyone who needs them. It's the kind of thing you might take for granted, but to someone who's never been able to, ordering a pizza can be a pretty historic act. *Support Easter Seals.*



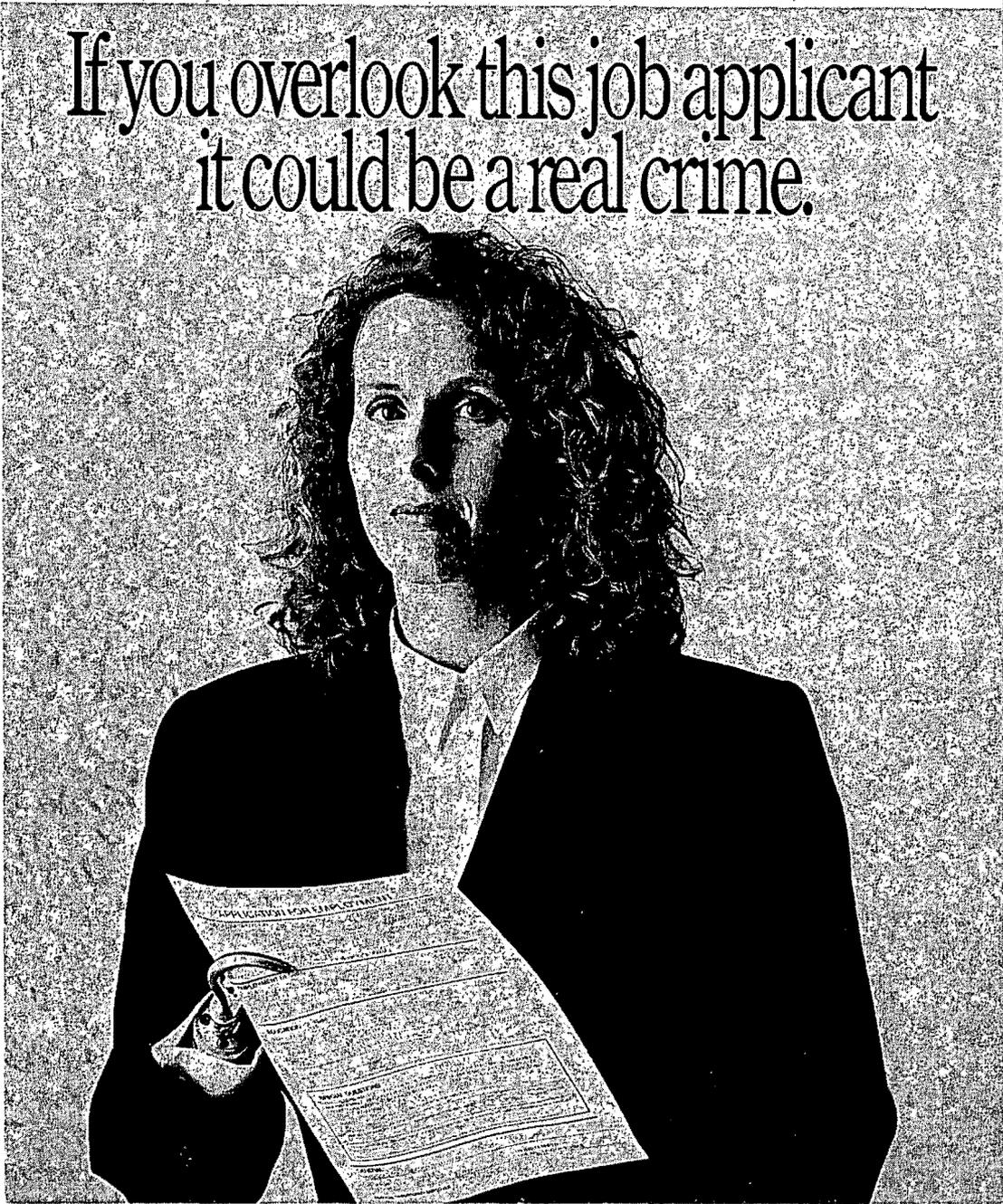
# It took an act of Congress to order this pizza.



Not only could you be missing out on some valuable talent, you could be breaking the law. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires all employers to make workplaces accessible and to give everyone who's qualified the chance to apply for a job — without discrimination. That could mean overlooking your prejudices and giving someone a chance that's long overdue. *Support Easter Seals.*



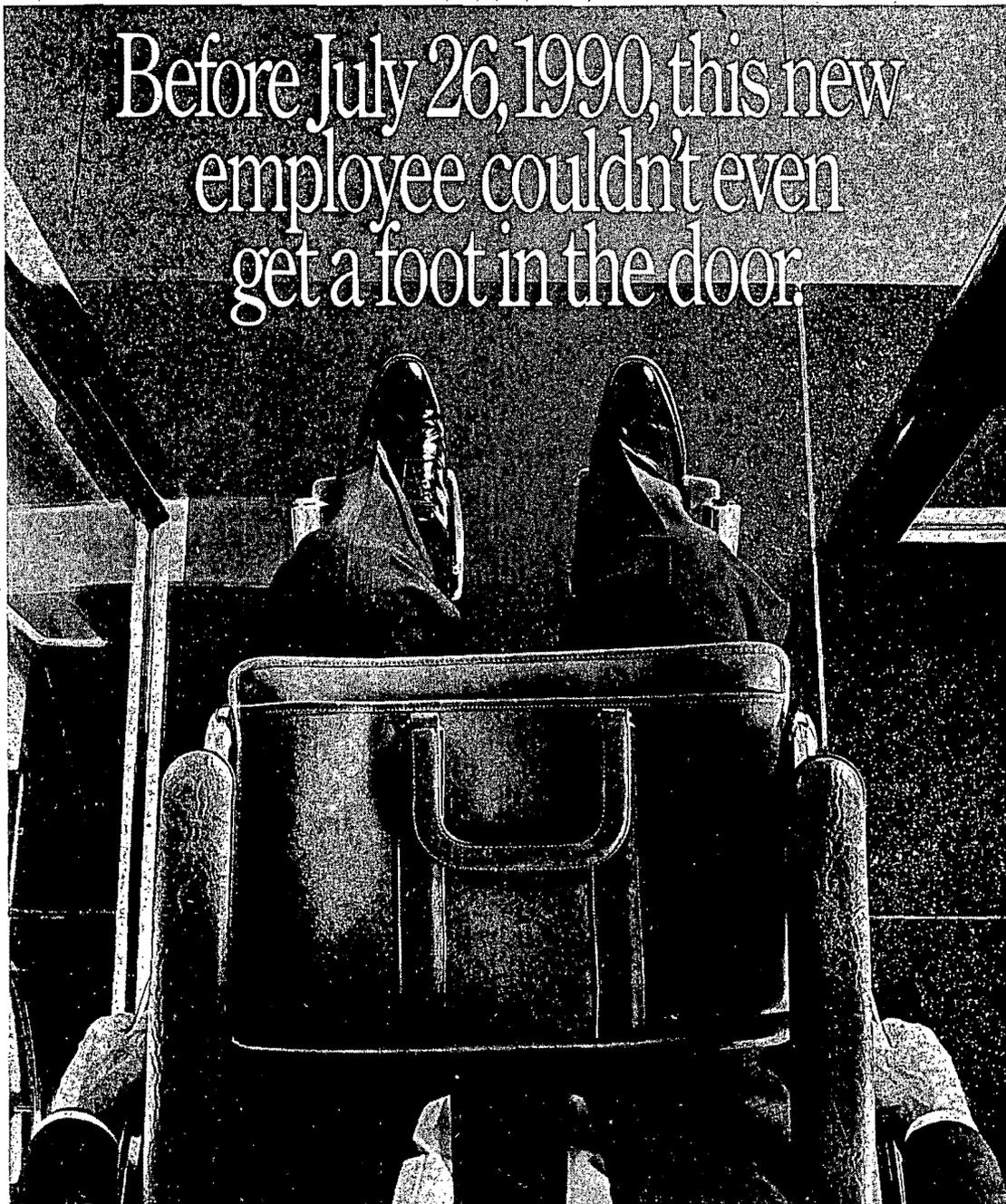
If you overlook this job applicant  
it could be a real crime.



That's when Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act. It means workplaces must be accessible, and no qualified person can be denied the right to apply for a job. But best of all, it means everyone starts out on equal footing. *Support Easter Seals.*



Before July 26, 1990, this new employee couldn't even get a foot in the door.



## Requirements For Services...

In the past, air carriers had different policies on how their personnel would handle specific situations. Some decisions were made without policy and often resulted in a discriminatory act. The ACAA regulations now spell out what is and is not allowed to occur. This will eliminate discriminatory practices as well as create uniform policies among the air carriers.

The regulations specifically address:

- refusal of transportation
- advance notice requirements
- attendants
- seat assignments
- provision of services and equipment
- stowage and treatment of personal equipment
- accommodations for persons with hearing impairments
- security screening
- communicable diseases
- medical certificates
- charges for accommodations

## Administrative Considerations...

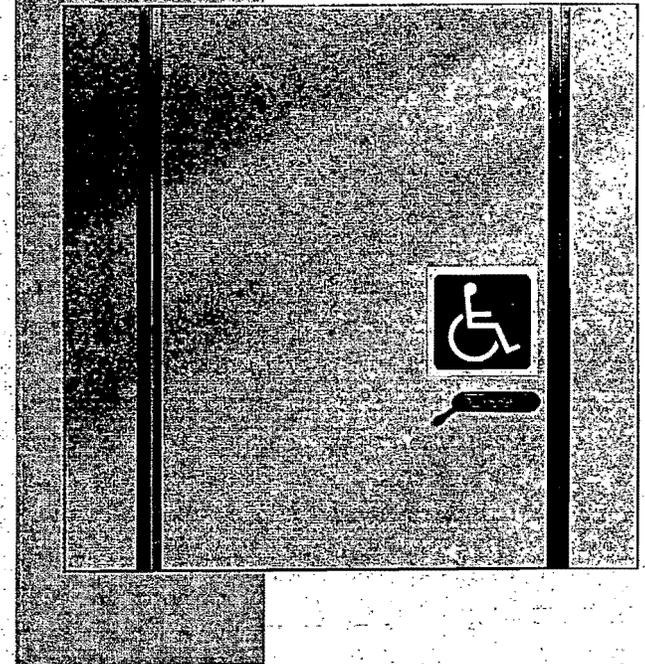
In order for the Air Carrier Access Act to be successful, not only is it important that rules are written, but it is equally important that air carrier personnel know what is required when specific situations arise.

Therefore, the administrative section of these regulations require air carriers to have:

- comprehensive training programs
- written programs covering all requirements
- complaint resolution procedures

For additional information about the Air Carrier Access Act please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Air Carrier Access Act  
National Easter Seal Society  
70 Easter Lake Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



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Towards Change:

The Air Carrier  
Access Act



### National Easter Seal Society

70 East Lake Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
312-726-6200 (Phone)  
312-726-4258 (TDD)  
312-726-1494 (Fax)

PR-47



Prior to 1986, there was no federal law to guide air carriers' conduct toward passengers with disabilities. The result was that disabled passengers did not expect to travel without unnecessary complications. Different airlines had varying policies which frustrated a passenger's travel in one way or another. For instance, airline policies differed as to whether a passenger must provide advance notice of his or her disability to be guaranteed service or whether or not an individual's wheelchair would be available in the midst of an indirect travel schedule.

This lack of consistent air carrier policy also existed within a single airline. Treatment of passengers with disabilities differed from one airport to the next and often depended on whether airline personnel were familiar with policies which were available.

Federal law **only** would protect individuals with disabilities, when they traveled by air, if an airline received money from the government. This was what the United States Supreme Court decided in *Department of Transportation v. Paralyzed Veterans of America*. If an airline used federal money, then section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act could be relied on to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination when they travel by air. In reality, though, very few commercial airlines received federal money; they did not have to comply with the section 504 law.

It was because of this Supreme Court decision that Congress promptly passed the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA). Congress believed passengers with disabilities should be treated like other passengers as long as safety was not compromised. It was signed into law by President Reagan on October 2, 1986. The ACAA states that:

No air carrier may discriminate against any otherwise qualified (individual with a disability), by reason of such [disability], in the provision of air transportation.

The purpose of the ACAA was to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and to create a framework within which the Department of Transportation (DOT) could monitor the conduct of the airline industry. This conduct could range from the practices used by airline personnel to assist passengers with disabilities to the design considerations of new aircraft. The Air Carrier Access Act's enactment and subsequent enforcement also provides assurances to passengers with disabilities that air travel will not be disrupted solely because of their disability.

## The Regulations...

Regulations, to implement the ACAA, were written by the DOT to ensure that all interested parties knew what would be expected of them in the future. These regulations will provide the guidance necessary to develop policies which capture the essence of the ACAA. Individuals with disabilities will be able to travel by air and know what to expect; and airline personnel, with proper training, will know how to handle various situations in a predictable and nondiscriminatory manner.

The regulations begin with the basic principle that:

"An air carrier shall not discriminate against otherwise qualified [disabled] individuals in the provision of air transportation."

In order to better understand what discrimination would be in the airline industry, the regulations are then separated into three subparts: aircraft and airport accessibility; requirements for services; and administrative considerations.

## Aircraft Accessibility...

The requirements for an aircraft depend on the size of the airplane and whether it is a new or an existing aircraft.

**NEW AIRCRAFT** design would be changed to include:

- movable aisle armrests
- stowage space for a folding wheelchair
- one accessible lavatory at least
- on-board wheelchair.

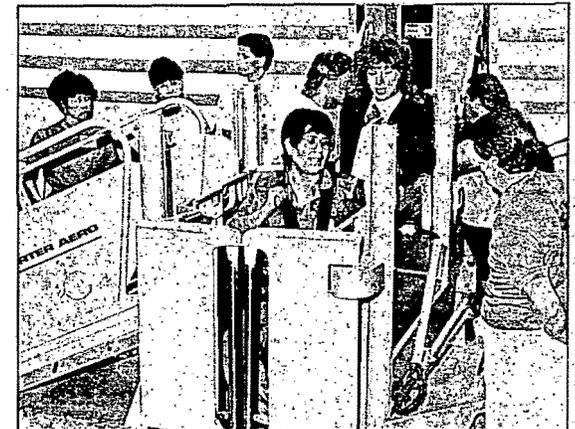
**EXISTING AIRCRAFT:** accessible changes, as above, are only required if there is a replacement scheduled for:

- cabin interior
- seats
- lavatory

## Airport Accessibility...

The ACAA only applies to portions of airports or air terminals that are owned, leased or operated by one or more airlines. New airports must meet Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) as well as six additional items which are specifically addressed in these regulations (existing facilities must comply with the six additional items within three years):

- terminal design
- baggage facilities
- ticketing system
- TDDs
- terminal information systems
- gate-aircraft interface



## Accessible Design Requirements— Who is Responsible?

Under the law, builders and developers are expected to make a good faith effort to comply with the accessibility requirements.

Of course, any individual who believes that a covered multifamily dwelling is being, or about to be constructed in a manner which would not conform to the Act, may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, or with the state or unit of local government which enforces a substantially equivalent state or local fair-housing law.

## The Process for Resolving Discrimination

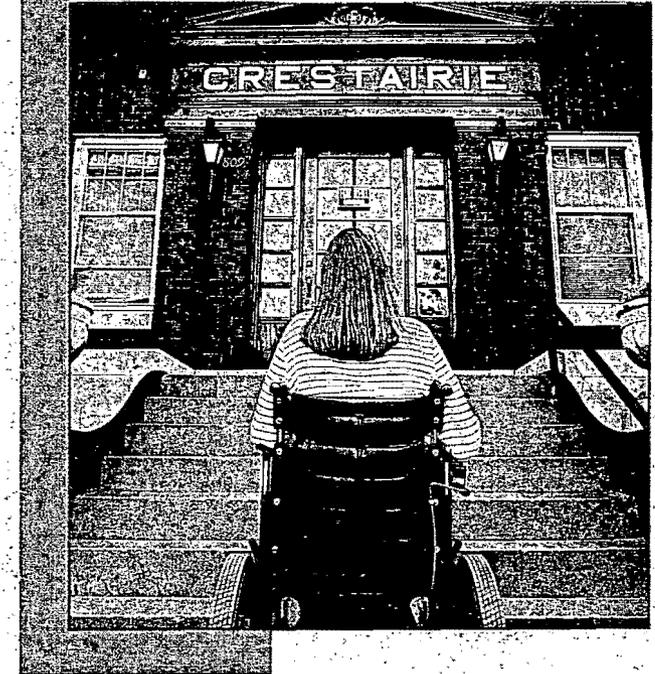
Any person who believes they are about to be or have been subjected to a discriminatory housing practice may file a complaint. Complaints must be filed no later than one year after an alleged discriminatory housing practice has occurred. The complaint may also be filed with HUD over the telephone.

Any individual who files a complaint might expect the following kinds of relief:

- correction or stopping of the discriminatory housing practice;
- access to the dwelling in question;
- relief for actual damages such as out of pocket expenses, lawyer's fees;
- civil penalties ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

For additional information about the Fair Housing Amendments Act please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Fair Housing Amendments Act  
National Easter Seal Society  
70 East Lake Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601



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Towards Change:

The Fair Housing  
Amendments Act



### National Easter Seal Society

70 East Lake Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
312-726-6200 (Phone)  
312-726-4258 (TDD)  
312-726-1494 (Fax)

PR-46



## What is Fair Housing?

All citizens, including persons with disabilities, have the basic right to decent, affordable housing. Ideally, this right should mean having the freedom to live in a neighborhood of one's choice, without fears or restrictions resulting from housing discrimination.

In 1968, Congress enacted Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act. Title VIII is commonly known as the Fair Housing Act, and prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental or financing of housing based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

## Why the New Fair Housing Amendments?

The need to amend Title VIII became evident as early as 1979. The law was difficult to enforce, and it did not protect persons with disabilities and families with children. So, in 1988 Congress enacted the Fair Housing Amendments Act. This new law added to the existing protected classes, people with disabilities and families with children, to protect these persons from unfair and discriminatory housing practices. In addition, the 1988 law provides for certain architectural accessibility and adaptable design requirements in new multifamily housing built for first occupancy on or after March 13, 1991.

## Who are Persons with Disabilities Protected by the Law?

The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 protects any person who:

- has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- has a record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

However, the protections of the law do not extend to anyone who is currently involved in or abusing illegal drugs. Therefore, while the law does not protect a current abuser of drugs, this does not apply to a person who uses drugs at the direction of a doctor.

## Discrimination Prohibited by the Law?

People with disabilities are protected by the Fair Housing Amendments Act from a variety of discriminatory housing practices. Under the law, it is unlawful to:

- refuse to sell or rent, or otherwise make unavailable, a dwelling to any buyer or renter because of a disability of that buyer or renter, or anyone associated with that buyer or renter;
- refuse to permit, at the expense of a person with a disability, reasonable modifications of existing premises occupied or to be occupied by that person if such modifications are necessary to afford that person full enjoyment of the premises;
- refusal, by the housing provider, to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, when such accommodations are necessary to afford a person with a disability equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling.
- failure to design new multi-family housing built for first occupancy on or after March 13, 1991, in a manner which includes specific accessible and adaptable design provisions, such as:
  - ✓ building entrances on accessible routes;
  - ✓ accessible public and common use areas;
  - ✓ all doors in the building must be wide enough for a person using a wheelchair to pass through;
  - ✓ each unit in a building with an elevator (and ground floor units in non-elevator buildings) must have:

- an accessible route into and through the unit;
- light switches and electrical switches and other controls located low enough;
- sufficient reinforcement in bathroom walls to install grab bars when needed; and
- kitchens and bathrooms designed so a person using a wheelchair can maneuver within and use these features.

## What About Discrimination Experienced by Groups?

Before passage of the Fair Housing Amendments Act, many sponsors of group homes for persons with disabilities experienced various kinds of housing discrimination. For example, zoning or land use laws were used to deny establishment of group homes in some residential neighborhoods. The Fair Housing Amendments Act now makes such discriminatory housing practices unlawful.



## In conversation...

- When talking with someone who has a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion who may be along.
- Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted, common expressions, such as "See you later" or "Got to be running along," that seems to relate to the person's disability.
- To get the attention of a person who has a hearing disability, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly, and expressively to establish if the person can read your lips. Not all persons with hearing impairments can lip-read. Those who do will rely on facial expressions and other body language to help in understanding. Show consideration by placing yourself facing the light source and keeping your hands and food away from your mouth when speaking. Keep mustaches well-trimmed. Shouting won't help. Written notes will.
- When talking with a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, place yourself at the wheelchair user's eye level to spare both of you a stiff neck.

- When greeting a person with a severe loss of vision, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. Say, for example, "On my right is Penelope Potts." When conversing in a group, remember to say the name of the person to whom you are speaking to give vocal cue. Speak in a normal tone of voice, indicate when you move from one place to another, and let it be known when the conversation is at an end.
- Give whole, unhurried attention when you're talking to a person who has difficulty speaking. Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting, be patient rather than speak for the person. When necessary, ask short questions that require short answers or a nod or shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so. Repeat what you understand. The person's reaction will clue you in and guide you to understanding.

## Some common courtesies...

- Offer assistance to a person with a disability if you feel like it, but wait until your offer is accepted BEFORE you help, and listen to any instructions the person may want to give.
- When giving directions to a person in a wheelchair, consider distance, weather conditions, and physical obstacles such as stairs, curbs, and steep hills.
- Use specifics such as "left a hundred feet" or "right two yards" when directing a person with a visual impairment.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person with a disability to get things done or said. Let the person set the pace in walking and talking.
- When planning events involving persons with disabilities, consider their needs ahead of time. If an insurmountable barrier exists, let them know about it prior to the event.



Awareness is  
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Towards Change:

Tips for  
Disability Awareness



### National Easter Seal Society

70 East Lake Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
312-726-6200 (Phone)  
312-726-4258 (TDD)  
312-726-1494 (Fax)





Jim Brynes, star of WISEGUY and spokesperson for "The First Step" campaign.

Everybody's fighting some kind of stereotype. People with disabilities are no exception. The difference is that the barriers we face begin with people's attitudes about us. And these attitudes are often rooted in misinformation and misunderstandings about who we are and how we became disabled.

Easter Seals' **The First Step** campaign sets out to change some of the misconceptions that get in our way—when we're looking for a job, trying to get around in our communities, and working to become accepted for who we are.

Awareness is the first step towards change.

## Some myths and facts about people with disabilities...

- Myth 1:** People with disabilities are brave and courageous.  
**Fact:** Adjusting to a disability actually requires adapting to a lifestyle, not bravery and courage.
- Myth 2:** All persons who use wheelchairs are chronically ill or sickly.  
**Fact:** The association between wheelchair-use and illness has probably evolved through hospitals using wheelchairs to transport sick people. A person may use a wheelchair for a variety of reasons, none of which may have anything to do with lingering illness.

- Myth 3:** Wheelchair use is confining; users of wheelchairs are "wheelchair-bound."  
**Fact:** A wheelchair, like a bicycle or an automobile, is a personal assistive device that enables someone to get around.
- Myth 4:** All persons with hearing disabilities can read lips.  
**Fact:** Lip-reading skill varies greatly among people who use it and is never wholly reliable.
- Myth 5:** People who are blind acquire a sixth sense.  
**Fact:** Although most people who are blind develop their remaining senses more fully, they do not have a sixth sense.
- Myth 6:** People with disabilities are more comfortable "with their own kind."  
**Fact:** Years of grouping people with disabilities in separate schools and institutions has reinforced this misconception. Today, more and more people are taking advantage of new opportunities to join the mainstream of our society.
- Myth 7:** Nondisabled people are obligated to "take care of" their fellow citizens with disabilities.  
**Fact:** People may offer assistance to whomever they choose, but most disabled persons prefer to be responsible for themselves.
- Myth 8:** Curious children should never be allowed to ask people about their disabilities.  
**Fact:** Many children have a natural, uninhibited curiosity and ask questions that some adults might find embarrassing. But scolding children for asking questions may make them think there is something "bad" about having a disability. Most people with disabilities won't mind answering a child's question.
- Myth 9:** The lives of people with disabilities are totally different than those of nondisabled people.  
**Fact:** People with disabilities go to school, get married, work, have families, do laundry, grocery shop, laugh, cry, pay taxes, get angry, have prejudices, vote, plan, and dream like everyone else.

- Myth 10:** It's all right for nondisabled people to park in accessible parking spaces for a short time.  
**Fact:** Because accessible parking spaces are designed and situated to meet the needs of persons who have disabilities, these spaces should only be used by people who need them.
- Myth 11:** Most people with disabilities are unable to have sexual relationships.  
**Fact:** Any person can have a sexual relationship by adapting the sexual activity. People with disabilities can have children naturally as well as adopt them. People with disabilities, like other people, are sexual beings.
- Myth 12:** People with disabilities always need help.  
**Fact:** Many people with disabilities are quite independent and capable of giving help. But if you want to help someone with a disability, ask first if they need it.
- Myth 13:** There's nothing one person can do to help eliminate the barriers confronting people with disabilities.  
**Fact:** Everyone can contribute to change. You can help remove barriers by:
- understanding the need for accessible parking and leaving it for those who need it.
  - encouraging participation of people with disabilities in community activities by making sure that meeting and event sites are accessible.
  - understanding children's curiosity about disabilities and people who have them.
  - advocating for a barrier-free environment.
  - speaking up when negative words or phrases are used in connection with disability.
  - writing producers and editors a note of support when they portray people with disabilities as they do others in the media.
  - accepting people with disabilities as individual human beings with the same needs and feelings you might have.
  - hiring qualified disabled persons whenever possible.

## Some general considerations for disability etiquette...

- \* People with disabilities are entitled to the courtesies that you extend to anyone. This includes their personal privacy. If you don't generally ask people about their sex lives, or their complexions, or their incomes, then don't ask people with disabilities about theirs.
- \* If you don't make a habit of leaning or hanging on to people you're with, then don't lean or hang on someone's wheelchair. Wheelchairs are an extension of personal space for people who use them.
- \* When you offer to assist someone with a vision impairment, allow the person to take your arm. This will help you to guide, rather than propel or lead this person.
- \* Treat adults as adults. Call a person by his or her first name only when you're extending this familiarity to everyone present. Don't patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head. Reserve this sign of affection for children; even if a wheelchair user's head rests temptingly at about the same height as a child's.



## When interviewing people with hearing losses...

- \* You may need to get the person's attention by tapping gently on the shoulder, or waving your hand or using some similar physical signal.
- \* If you are interviewing someone with a partial hearing impairment, ask where it would be most comfortable for you to sit.
- \* If an interpreter is present, speak to the person being interviewed rather than to the interpreter.
- \* If the person is lip-reading, look directly at the interviewee. Speak slowly and clearly. Do not exaggerate your lip movements or shout. Speak expressively because the person will rely on your facial expressions, gestures and body movements to understand you. (Note: it is estimated that only 3 out of 10 spoken words are visible on the lips.)
- \* Place yourself facing the light source and keep your hands and food away from your mouth when speaking.
- \* Shouting does not help and can be harmful. You may want to use written notes.

## When interviewing persons with vision disabilities...

- \* When greeting a person with a severe vision disability, always identify yourself and introduce anyone else who might be present.
- \* When offering a handshake, say something like "Shall we shake hands?"
- \* When offering seating, place the person's hand on the back or arm of the seat.
- \* Let the person know if you move or need to end the conversation.

## When interviewing persons with speech difficulties...

- \* Give your undivided attention when talking with someone who has difficulty speaking.
- \* Ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of head when you can.
- \* Don't pretend to understand if you do not. Try rephrasing what you wish to communicate.

## When interviewing persons using a wheelchair or crutches...

- \* Don't lean on a person's wheelchair. The chair is a part of the body space of the person who uses it.
  - \* DO NOT patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head. This is a sign of affection that should be reserved only for small children, and most of them don't like it either!
  - \* When interviewing a person who uses a wheelchair or crutches for more than a few minutes, sit down or kneel to place yourself at that person's eye level to avoid stiff necks.
  - \* Encourage people who use crutches or canes to keep them within easy reach.
  - \* Make sure that the place where you plan to conduct the interview is accessible. Check the following:
    - Are there parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities nearby?
    - Is there a ramped or step-free entrance?
    - Are there accessible bathrooms?
    - If the interview is not on the first floor, does the building have an elevator?
    - Are there water fountains and telephones low enough for a person in a wheelchair to use?
- Be sure to notify the interviewee in advance if there are problems with your location. Discuss what to do and make alternate plans with the person you plan to interview.



Awareness is  
the First Step  
Towards Change:

Tips for Portraying  
People with Disabilities  
in the Media



### National Easter Seal Society

70 East Lake Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60601  
312-726-6200 (Phone)  
312-726-4258 (TDD)  
312-726-1494 (Fax)

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Fear of the unknown. Inadequate experience. Incorrect or distorted information. Lack of knowledge. These shape some of the attitudinal barriers that people with disabilities face as they try to gain access and acceptance in their communities.

People working in the media can exert a powerful influence over the way people with disabilities are perceived. It's important to the more than 43 million Americans with disabilities that they be portrayed realistically and that their disabilities are explained accurately.

Awareness is the first step towards change.

## Some tips for reporting on people with disabilities...

1. Use the word **disability** when referring to persons or people with disabilities. Don't use the word **handicapped**. A disabling condition may or may not be handicapping. For example, someone who uses a wheelchair has a physical **disability**. This person is **handicapped** when faced with a set of stairs when there is no ramp alongside.
2. Emphasize the person, not the disability. Use "people with disabilities" as a first description in a piece; then, if you need to, "disabled persons" in later references.
3. Because people are not conditions, don't label individuals as "the disabled," "epileptics," "post-polios" or with other names of conditions. Refer, instead, to "people with cerebral palsy" or "someone who has epilepsy."
4. Omit, if possible, any mention of someone's disability if it is not a pertinent part of the story.
5. Whenever possible, depict the typical achiever who has a disability not just the superachieving individual.
6. When writing about people with disabilities, choose words that carry nonjudgemental connotations and are accurate descriptions.

## NEVER USE . . .

*Victim*-say person who has/person who experienced/person with.

*Cripple/Crippled/The Crippled*-say person with a disability or individual with a disability caused by or as a result of...

*Afflicted By/Afflicted With*-say the person has.

*Invalid (literally means not valid)*-say a person who has a disability resulting from or caused by.

*Normal*-what most people, including those with disabilities, think they are.

*A Patient*-connotes sickness and a person passively waiting to be served. Most people with disabilities are no sicker than others.

*Sympathy*-something most individuals with disabilities would trade instantly for acceptance and respect for their talents and abilities.

## AVOID USING...

*Wheelchair Bound/Confined To A Wheelchair*-say uses a wheelchair. People can't generally sleep in them.

*Homebound Employment*-say employed in the home.

*Unfortunate, Pitiful, Poor, Deaf and Dumb, Crip, Deformed, Blind As A Bat and any other words or cliches that are judgemental or stereotyping. NO replacements.*

## USE WITH CARE...

*Courageous, Brave, Inspirational* and other similar words that are routinely used to describe any person who has a disability. Adapting to a disability does not necessarily include acquiring these traits.

7. People with disabilities live everyday lives and should be portrayed as contributing members of the community. These portrayals could include:
  - \* A discussion of the civil rights issues that directly affect people with disabilities, such as employment opportunities, accessibility in housing, education, public transportation, and telecommunication systems. The disability movement is a civil rights movement.
  - \* A wide variety of people with disabilities, not just those - such as wheelchair-users - who are most easily recognized by the general public.

\* Employees/employers with disabilities working together in non-stereotypical jobs.

\* Casting people with disabilities in background scenes and in parts that don't focus on their disabilities.

\* Showing people with disabilities doing ordinary, everyday activities such as cooking dinner, paying bills, shopping and parenting.

\* Focusing on abilities, not on limitations, with only a passing mention of crutches, canes, etc. that are used as adaptive tools.

\* Integrating a person's disability into that person's total identity. This might include showing someone with a disability experiencing the same pain/pleasure that others derive from competitive sports, recreational activities, work, parenting, sex, education and community involvement.

\* Including people with disabilities in advertising since there are more than 43 million - not counting their families and friends - who eat, wear, use, drive and buy the products advertised.

8. Ask people with disabilities to provide technically correct information and assistance to insure that stereotypes are avoided in the media.

9. Portray people with disabilities as PEOPLE, with all their accompanying strengths and frailties.

Jim Byrnes, star of WISEGUY and spokesperson for "The First Step" Campaign



## Interviewing people with disabilities...

In general, prepare and conduct your interview as you would with anyone. Put your subject at ease. Be clear in your questioning. Be candid and blunt when you need to be, and ask for clarification of terms or issues when necessary. And be upfront about your deadlines, the focus of your story, and when and where it will appear.

## Interviewing etiquette...

1. It is appropriate to shake hands when introduced to a person with a disability. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb do shake hands.
2. Treat adults as adults. Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when calling everyone present by his or her first name.
3. When talking with someone who has a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion who may be along.
4. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use words that seem to relate to a disability. "See you soon," "Walk this way" or "Got to be running along" are common expressions everyone uses.
5. If you offer to help, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
6. Consider the needs of people with disabilities when planning events.
7. Conduct interviews in a manner that emphasizes abilities, achievements and individual qualities.
8. Avoid putting people with disabilities on a pedestal. Conduct your interview as you would with anyone.
9. Don't emphasize differences between people as this reinforces the "one of them" vs. "one of us" attitude - barrier to acceptance of people with disabilities in society.

*All*

*Of Us  
Have The  
Ability  
To Make  
A  
Difference*

National  
Easter  
Seal  
Society  
Annual  
Report  
1991



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