

DRACH: Housing advocacy out of adversity

■ How the shortcomings of a HUD summit gave rise to a powerful national coalition

It was December 1994, and a fair portion of the nation's housing industry gathered in Washington, D.C. More than one thousand housing providers, state and community housing officials, fair housing and civil rights agencies and others were in attendance at a Fair Housing Summit convened by HUD, the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

There were the usual workshops and seminars covering the usual topics—rules and regulations related to fair housing rights, how to comply with them and what happens if you don't. HUD used the summit as an opportunity to tout a new effort to "reinvent" its programs and policies. For most of the participants, the proceedings might have seemed routine.

But for a handful of participants, the gathering was anything but routine. Scattered among the summit-goers were no more than a couple of dozen people with a special interest—housing for people with disabilities. Most of them were working at the local level to improve housing opportunities for people with disabilities in their communities. They attended the summit in hopes of learning strategies and solutions to overcome the barriers that prevented too many people with disabilities from living in affordable, accessible and dignified housing.

Instead, they got a personal introduction and a front row seat to witness the very attitudes and behaviors that gave rise to the barriers they were combatting at home.

"I was outraged," says Karen Tamley, one of the handful, "about the lack of inclusion for people with disabilities." According to Tamley, housing policy coordinator for Chicago's Access Living, there was no reference to people with disabilities in sessions she attended, even when the discussion centered on laws and policies that cover disability.

"It was pretty outrageous," says Becca Vaughn, another of the handful. "There was only one segregated workshop related to disability issues out of the whole four days."

"We became pretty outraged at how we were being referred to," Vaughn adds. "For instance, HUD referred to group homes as 'service enriched housing.'"

Finally, Tamley, Vaughn and the others had enough of what they perceived as patronizing, exclusional and demeaning attitudes represented at the summit. "We basically staged a coup," Tamley recalls.

The disability advocates, many of whom had not met before, banded together to put together a quick list of demands that started with a request to meet with HUD's top official and to address the whole assembly.

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DRACH: Taking housing by the horns

Housing. Accessible, affordable housing. It's great if you can get it, but the simple fact is far too many people with disabilities can't get it. It's a chronic problem—one that's been high on the list of problems facing people with disabilities for as long as most of us can remember. Yet there has been relatively little organized advocacy—especially on a national scale—aimed at bringing about significant change. Until recently.

In this issue, *ILRU NetWork* highlights DRACH—Disability Rights Action Coalition for Housing. The emphasis on *action* is added by DRACH members. They describe their coalition in terms of what they're *doing* to improve the dismal housing situation that forces millions of Americans with disabilities to live in institutions, nursing homes and other isolated, segregated and undignified settings.

Aside from its vision and direct, no-nonsense advocacy, DRACH possesses a wealth of information about housing laws, funding streams, accessibility requirements and more. It's more information than we can squeeze into these pages. Nonetheless, we hope the information we have included will be interesting and useful to you—no matter if you're already a sophisticated housing advocate or just setting out to become one.

—Richard Petty
IL Net Director

DRACH: Disability Rights Action Coalition for Housing

DRACH is a national grassroots housing network of individuals with all types of disabilities, disability activists and customers of federal housing programs. We operate in ways which affirm the civil and human rights of people with disabilities, regardless of type of disability, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, age or color. Our members actively work at their local levels to ensure that housing policies and programs reflect civil and human rights.

Since 1994, DRACH has been working collectively on the federal, state and local levels to ensure that people with disabilities are offered equal choice and opportunities to housing. Through activities such as outreach, information sharing, grassroots advocacy workshops and direct action, our goal is to create a nationwide, unified platform to eliminate decades of oppressive disability housing policies and practices.

DRACH is working to:

- Ensure stronger enforcement of and compliance with civil rights housing laws such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988.
- End segregated housing for people with disabilities.
- Eliminate the mandatory linkage of services from housing.
- Increase tenant based rental assistance and homeownership opportunities.
- Increase the dollars available for home modifications.
- Nationally promote inclusion of the "visitability" concept (1 no-step entrance and 32" clear doorways) in all new housing.

Source: DRACH Promotional Flyer

Continued from page 1

They did address the congregation at an evening plenary session. "We talked about the need for more accessible housing, ending segregated housing and providing more rental assistance," says Tamley. Vaughn recalls a "mixed response" among those who attended the plenary session.

Whatever the response, the little band of disability advocates quickly realized they couldn't stop what they'd started at the summit. United by frustration and anger, they vowed to stay in touch with each other and on top of the issues that brought them together. As the Disability Rights Action Coalition for Housing, they are the first—and only—disability housing coalition on the national scene.

DRACH's earliest days were marked by a series of conference calls immediately after the Fair Housing Summit. In the course of the calls, the group developed a 15-page response to HUD's "Blueprint" to reinvent its programs as well as the agency's overall approach to "special needs housing" for people with disabilities. (*See related story on page 3.*)

While the report did create "somewhat of a stir" among the rank and file in HUD, DRACH had still not achieved one of its primary demands—a meeting with then HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros. Vaughn, who serves as DRACH coordinator in

addition to her duties as housing activist for the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center, credits Tamley with bringing that meeting about.

Tamley was on the scene in Denver where Cisneros was arriving at a meeting amidst much hoopla and media. Using tactics Tamley says she learned from participation in ADAPT actions, she and other advocates surrounded the HUD chief and stopped him in his tracks. "Karen kept shoving our paper in his face," Vaughn recalls.

Anxious to avoid a scene, Cisneros took the paper and agreed to meet. When they did meet a short time later, the group observed a change in Cisneros' attitude. "The more we talked," says Vaughn, "the more we could see he was getting it. Eventually we saw the light bulb come on."

Cisneros "opened the doors to HUD," giving DRACH members access to agency program staff who make the day-to-day decisions about how laws and policies are interpreted and enforced. With Cisneros gone and Secretary Andrew Cuomo at the helm, DRACH members say they continue to be able to work closely with the agency.

And "work" seems to be the operative word here. "This stuff is hard," says Vaughn. "The laws, policies and regulations are real complex. You really have to be motivated to get in there and understand them and to follow through."

Most of the hard-core policy work is carried out by a few "hard-hitting, very serious, very dedicated" DRACH members. But that's not to say there isn't room for others, especially on the front lines. Part of DRACH's mission is to develop a national grassroots housing advocacy movement. To that end, DRACH has enlisted several regional coordinators (*see list on page 8*) to organize and share information with advocates at the state and community levels.

Beyond its policy work and grassroots organizing, DRACH conducts workshops on housing issues; stages direct actions; distributes alerts and action plans to national advocacy networks; works with other housing organizations; drafts legislation; and participates on housing boards, committees, work groups and public forums—among other things.

The amount of work indicates the sense of urgency among DRACH members who recognize that the disability community is "way behind" on many policy issues. "The Fair Housing Amendment is supposed to promote integration," Tamley says, "but millions of dollars go into segregated housing. We still have policies that force people to accept housing that forces them to be isolated and dependent."

That's why, Vaughn says, DRACH is trying to create a national housing justice movement. "We need to project a new way," she says.

THE REALITY BEHIND HOUSING MYTHS

Advocates urge HUD to get in touch with reality for people with disabilities

In January 1995, with their maddening experience at the national fair housing summit still fresh on their minds, the coalition of advocates who had bonded at the meeting issued a 15-page document entitled *Responding to HUD's "Housing for Persons with Disabilities"* — *Debunking the Myths and Recommending Policies WE Can Live With*. Directed to then HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros, the paper was an attempt to raise the federal agency's consciousness on important disability rights issues.

The timing was critical. HUD had just announced plans to "reinvent" its programs and policies. The fledgling coalition of housing advocates was barely up and running and hadn't even settled on a name. But they would not let those small details stand in the way of getting on the record. They submitted the report as the National Action Coalition for Disability Rights in Housing.

"In light of HUD's poor treatment of persons with disabilities in the past," the advocates wrote, "it is imperative that HUD not continue to alienate, humiliate and discriminate against persons with disabilities by not including actual persons with disabilities in policy discussion and the development of programs."

The report concludes with recommendations for assuring that people with disabilities receive a "fair share" of the federal housing resources HUD controls. The advocates also advance ideas to assure that rights protections and consumer control are incorporated into HUD programs and policies.

In laying the foundation for its recommendations, the coalition accused HUD of developing programs and policies based on myths about people with disabilities. "These myths have been invented and perpetuated by society, by the housing and services industries, and by HUD," they wrote.

The advocates countered the myths with their view of reality as experienced by "the vast majority of persons with disabilities."

(The myth and reality statements on this page are excerpts from the original document. To see the report in its entirety, check out NetWork Online on the ILRU website. —Ed.)

MYTH: Housing providers and service providers know better than persons with disabilities how best to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

REALITY: People with disabilities are the best and most reliable source of information about their housing and fair housing needs.

MYTH: *Mini-institutions*—like industry-controlled group homes, "shared living" and single room occupancy programs—can be considered "housing" for persons with disabilities, even though such programs are not considered "housing" for persons without disabilities.

REALITY: *Mini-institutions* ... are not considered "housing" for persons without disabilities because, in fact, such institutions are NOT housing.

MYTH: "Supportive services" must be provided in all housing for persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities are incapable of independent living—without professionally managed services.

REALITY: "Supportive services" should not be provided as part of housing programs for persons with disabilities. There should be a clear and complete separation between the housing and any services a person with a disability might receive.

MYTH: The distinguishing features of each housing program for persons with disabilities must be the service package that must be incorporated into the housing.

REALITY: Housing programs for persons with disabilities should be based on the HOUSING needs—not the service needs—of persons with disabilities

MYTH: People with the same or similar disabilities all need the same supportive services, and people with different disabilities never need similar supportive services.

REALITY: Segregation on the basis of services need or on the basis of use of service is neither appropriate or legal.

MYTH: It is legal and reasonable to "set aside" a certain percentage of a program's funds for persons with a particular diagnosis or type of disability (e.g. "mental illness," AIDS, "deaf," etc.).

REALITY: According to Section 504, it is not legal to "set aside" a percentage of funds of a "general disability program" for persons with particular diagnoses or disabilities.

MYTH: The so-called civil and fair housing "rights" of persons with disabilities are not really equivalent to civil rights related to race, color, religion, etc.

REALITY: Our civil rights are no less clear and no less valid than others.

MYTH: Only housing where persons with disabilities actually live needs to be physically and programmatically accessible and needs to provide "reasonable accommodations."

REALITY: In addition to the housing where persons with disabilities actually reside, other housing should be accessible—for example, that of the family friends, neighbors and business clients of persons with disabilities, as well as property that is for rent or sale—in order for persons with disabilities to have meaningful opportunities to be full and independent members of their communities.

Plan Your Work, Work Your Plan

Your community's blueprint for federal housing dollars

Are you clueless about how your community uses all the federal housing dollars it gets from HUD? Never fear—the consolidated plan is here!

Communities that have more than 50,000 residents and receive federal housing dollars are required to file a consolidated plan with HUD. The same goes for counties with populations of 200,000 or more. The plan consists of a 3-5 year strategic plan and annual action plans and evaluation reports. The plan is the community's chance to evaluate housing needs, analyze the existing market and develop long-term strategies to meet the priority needs.

Communities must file their plans with HUD in order to receive their federal housing dollars. And, before they can file their plans, they must have citizen input through public hearings and written comments. In its last newsletter, DRACH suggests that in some communities, the consolidated plan is "dripping with 'handicappism' and portrays people with disabilities as 'special,' those to be feared ..."

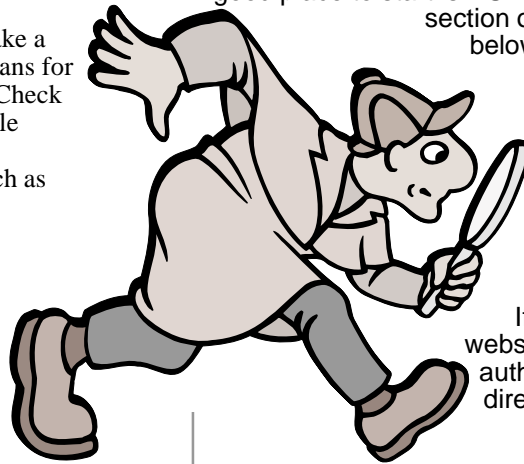
DRACH encourages advocates to take a good, close look at the consolidated plans for both their community and their state. Check out how they portray and include people with disabilities. Look for housing practices that promote segregation, such as group homes. And be alert to housing programs that may require participation in services.

Once you've reviewed the plan, DRACH says follow up with written comments and suggested revisions. Take advantage of the comment period to promote ideas like:

- setting aside state/city funds for an accessibility modification fund,
- requiring basic accessibility or visitability" in all new housing units built or renovated with HUD funds,
- including a strong commitment to the fair housing and civil rights of people with disabilities, and
- requiring all HUD recipients to be in full compliance with Sec. 504 and the Fair Housing Act design features and nondiscrimination provisions.

IN SEARCH OF THE "CON PLAN"?

Not sure how to track down your town's consolidated plan? One good place to start is HUD's website, which includes a whole section on consolidated planning, at the URL below.



The site features the executive summaries of plans submitted by many cities. Within each summary you'll find the name and contact information for the person or department you can contact to make comments or get more information.

If you don't find what you need on the website, a call to your local housing authority should point you in the right direction.

<http://www.hud.gov/progdsc/conplan.html>

DRACH "CHIPPING AWAY" AT HOUSING DISCRIMINATION

DRACH describes its work on the national housing scene as "chipping away" at the bureaucracy. While there is clearly more work ahead of them, DRACH members say they are proud of what they've accomplished in their five years together.

In response to DRACH's "chipping," in recent months HUD has:

- Increased funding for Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA).
- Revised the Fair Housing Enforcement Office national disability questionnaire used in fair housing discrimination investigations.
- Included visitability concepts in the HOPE VI program to rehabilitate and replace public housing.
- Abandoned a "Disability Task Force" intended to determine if housing for people with disabilities is a civil rights issue.
- Redirected 25 percent of funds earmarked for project-based "mini-institutions" to integrated, tenant-based rental assistance.
- Incorporated basic accessibility elements into the current inspection of all HUD-owned property.
- Set aside more than \$2 million (distributed through competitive grants) to test for discrimination based on disability in the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP).

CONCRETE CHANGE

“Mother of visitability” seeks basic access in all homes

In housing circles Eleanor Smith is known as “the mother of visitability.” And a conversation with Smith is reminiscent of talking with a mother who’s fiercely proud and constantly nurturing the promise and potential of her offspring. More than a dozen years ago, Smith “gave birth” to a vision that is perhaps most notable for its simplicity: people with disabilities—particularly those who use wheelchairs—should be able to visit the homes of friends, family and associates with ease and dignity.

That’s it—the whole vision. It came to Smith on the day she went to check out 20 new houses constructed in Atlanta by Habitat for Humanity. “I looked at those houses,” she recalls, “and thought what would have been so hard about making these houses accessible? What would be the big deal?”

Smith admits that for most of her life as a wheelchair user, she’d just accepted the inaccessibility of her friends’ and families’ homes without much question. “I thought of it sort of like the weather. If I could get in, it was a good day. Otherwise, like the weather, there wasn’t much I could do about it,” she says.

She knows exactly what changed her way of thinking and gives credit to her involvement with ADAPT. “They were working on getting lifts on all new buses,” Smith says, “and I can remember at first thinking that seemed like a lot to ask.”

But the more she worked on the issue, the more Smith recognized transportation’s role in eliminating segregation and isolation for people with disabilities. Extending the notion of visitable housing, to her, seemed a logical next step.

Making a home visitable, Smith says, is easy. It’s simply a matter of incorporating one no-step entrance and making sure that the interior doors—especially bathroom doors—are wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through (i.e., 32 inches clear passage space). Visitability is “basic access—not full accessibility,” she points out. “On new houses the changes needed are not complicated. What’s terribly hard is to get the public attitudes to change because of the larger society’s inertia and prejudice. But, it’s not complicated at all to understand the reasons for it or to do.”

Smith had already been working on the visitability issue for several years when she attended HUD’s 1994 fair housing summit that resulted in the alliance of disability advocates that would later become DRACH. At first, she says, the others weren’t aware of the visitability concept. “But then they got it,” Smith says, “and became strong advocates for it themselves.”

In fact, visitability is one of the six core issues DRACH advocates for. Before DRACH came along, Smith was promoting visitability through the organization she founded—Concrete Change. DRACH, she says, has helped to bring the issue to a bigger audience and has opened some doors for Concrete Change. “If it hadn’t been for DRACH,”

Smith says, “Concrete Change would have never reached HUD.”

So far, a handful of cities and a few states have passed visitability legislation, with Texas being the most recent. The issue is also getting attention in other countries. England recently passed a mandate requiring basic access in every new home built in the country. “That’s visitability advocacy in action,” Smith says.

She hopes that advocates elsewhere will be encouraged by these successes and take on visitability in their own communities. “It’s all about people getting on board in their local areas. It’s about creating a train and getting people locally to jump on board.”

THE STEPS TO NO-STEPS (AND OTHER CONCRETE CHANGES)

Eleanor Smith, “mother of visitability” and founder of Concrete Change, wants to make it easy for local advocates to join the visitability movement. The organization’s website (<http://www.eleanors.home.mindspring.com>) is loaded with information to help in the effort, including the following list of ways anybody can become an advocate for Concrete Change:

- ◆ Copy and distribute the material from this website.
- ◆ When building your own home or buying one under construction, decline to do business with any builders who say they cannot or will not incorporate visitability at little or no additional cost.
- ◆ Find a local builder or developer who is willing to include visitability in every home in his or her next project. When the development is ready for sales, heap public appreciation on them and steer buyers to their development.
- ◆ Set in motion a state law that would require all new houses in your state to have basic access. See if a state legislator would sponsor such a bill. The more states that drop in this bill, the more people realize the good sense of it, and the faster the opponents to the bill have to hop. We have reason to believe that opponents will get tired before this movement does.
- ◆ Initiate a city or county ordinance similar to one that passed in Atlanta in 1992, requiring basic access in certain private, single-family houses, whether or not the intended occupant has a disability.
- ◆ Urge your local affiliate of Habitat for Humanity to build all their homes visitable. Habitat builds in over 1,100 locations in the United States (and in many locations overseas), so it’s likely they have an affiliate near you. Habitat’s central headquarters included universal basic access in their construction recommendations several years ago. Approach your affiliate and urge them to include visitability in all their new homes, and in renovations whenever possible. Warning: in quite a few locales, they have been a tougher nut to crack than a person might think. Persist!

DRACH'S TOP FIVE WAYS TO BECOME AN EFFECTIVE HOUSING ADVOCATE

- 1** Be passionate about fair housing for all.
- 2** Become very familiar with the Fair Housing Act, Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act and your state and local housing laws.
- 3** Read the consolidated plan for your community and participate in public input opportunities associated with it.
- 4** Get involved with other groups who are working on affordable issues.
- 5** Establish a reputation as a housing expert in your community and network, network, network!

Life, liberty—and the pursuit of housing

Housing is a civil right say DRACH members

Access to affordable, accessible, dignified housing is a civil right. Right? Well, maybe not if you're a Constitutional scholar. But if you're a DRACH member? Definitely. Housing is a civil right. At least it's so closely associated with our rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness that it has to be considered a civil right in its own right.

For Bill Henning, it's imperative that disability advocates take the right to equal housing as seriously as any civil right. Henning is director of the Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled (CORD) in Massachusetts. He says he's seen far too many instances where people with disabilities will settle for any housing solution—even one that discriminates against them—for lack of a better alternative.

Henning says that at least 20 percent of the consumers calling CORD for assistance are looking for housing information and assistance. Often, he says, the calls give rise to other issues such as integration and requirements that some housing be linked to services—areas in which people with disabilities are clearly treated differently than other people.

“We see adults with disabilities living with parents or siblings, in institutions, group settings, nursing homes and elderly

developments,” Henning says, “because there are no other options for them.” Trapped in such settings, people with disabilities are more subject to abuse, he adds, noting that CORD staff has seen a number of abuse cases stemming from inappropriate housing.

To expand the options for people who need accessible housing, CORD and other housing rights activists recently convinced the Massachusetts legislature to appropriate \$10 million for home modifications. The funds, available to anyone who demonstrates a financial need, can be used to modify any type of dwelling. This, Henning says, will allow people to return to their own homes or other dwellings that they choose as opposed to being forced to accept unsuitable housing just because it's available.

To Henning's way of thinking, housing is no different than other disability rights areas such as personal assistance services, transportation and the civil rights protections of the ADA. He believes the disability community should be as passionate in its fight for fair and equal housing opportunities as they are about any other civil rights issue. “When someone messes with your civil rights,” he says, “you don't settle for charity.” The same, he says, should be true for affordable and accessible housing.

Putting people before projects

DRACH works for more choice in Sec. 811 program

“If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.” Jim Parker, one of DRACH's regional representatives, is concerned that there is such a shortage of affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities that advocates will embrace any housing opportunity that comes along. He fears that by focusing so hard on the housing or lack of it, we lose sight of the people—and their rights.

In making his point, Parker, coordinator for advocacy projects with the New Mexico Governor's Committee on Concerns of the Handicapped, points to a proliferation of housing projects being developed with federal Sec. 811 dollars. Unlike Sec. 8 funds, which go directly to tenants in the form of subsidy vouchers, Sec. 811 dollars are used to fund housing projects. These “project-based” funds subsidize building and operation of the property, allowing tenants reduced rent.

Often, Parker says, the housing is for special populations and not open to everybody. Many of them require tenants to accept services such as meals, treatment or counseling “whether or not they want or need them,” Parker says. “And that's just not acceptable.”

Because the funds go to projects and not tenants, he adds, people who want to move have no subsidy to take with them. Faced with the prospect of finding housing with no financial assistance, many will choose to stay in the project—no matter what that means for their rights.

Parker believes that some in the disability advocacy community may be unwittingly contributing to the problem. “They'll write a letter of support for a project because it provides some housing and that's better than no housing,” he says. Project developers, he says, know the

right buzzwords to make it sound like a good deal. And, he says, they are skillful in “playing on the fears” of communities faced with critical housing shortages. As hard as it might be to pass up more housing, Parker feels strongly that advocates must “stick to their guns” in advocating for choice in housing.

Parker notes that DRACH was successful in pointing out to HUD a Sec. 811 provision that allows funds to be used for subsidy vouchers that go directly to tenants. In fact, HUD recently redirected 25 percent of its Sec. 811 funds to tenant subsidy vouchers. DRACH is advocating for that amount to be doubled in the near future.

“DRACH has really helped,” Parker says, “not just the disability community, but the bureaucratic community as well, to help everybody understand the issues.”

Need housing info?

Here are some of our picks for places to start for useful housing information. We have more selections on our website. Check out the box to the right for where they are and how to click to them.



Center for Universal Design
School of Design
North Carolina State University
Box 8613
Raleigh, NC 27695-8613
Phone: 919-515-3082 (V/TTY) or 800-647-6777 (Info Requests)
<http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud/>

FannieMae Housing & Community Development
<http://www.fanniemae.com/neighborhoods/index.html>

Federal Rent Assistance (HUD)
<http://www.hud.gov/fedrent.html>

Housing Assistance Council
National Office
1025 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 606
Washington, D.C. 20005
Phone: 202-842-8600
Fax: 202-347-3441
<http://www.ruralhome.org>

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials
630 Eye Street, NW
Washington DC 20001
Phone: 202-289-3500 Fax: 202-289-8181
<http://www.nahro.org>

National Council of State Housing Agencies
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 438
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: 202-624-7710
Fax: 202-624-5899
<http://www.ncsha.org/>

National Home of Your Own Alliance
Phone: 800-220-8770
<http://alliance.unh.edu/>

National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC)
1012 Fourteenth Street NW, Suite 610
Washington, D.C. 20005
202-662-1530; Fax 202-393-1973
<http://www.nlihc.org/>
(Great links section! –Ed.)

Opening Doors
<http://www.c-c-d.org/doors.html>

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Rural Development
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/>

U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
<http://www.hud.gov/disabled.html>

NetNotes

If you haven't checked out *ILRU NetWork Online*, we hope you'll take a few minutes to take a look! You'll find past issues of *ILRU NetWork* in both text and .pdf formats, job announcements, training notices, links to other cool sites and more.

We're building this site, so once you've visited, let us know what you think and what else you'd like to see on the site. You'll find *ILRU NetWork Online* on the ILRU website: <http://www.ilru.org>. Click on the *ILRU NetWork Online* icon and you're on your way!

Here are some items you'll find that are of special relevance to this issue of *ILRU NetWork*:

The full text of *Responding to HUD's Housing for Persons with Disabilities: Debunking the Myths and Recommending Policies WE Can Live With*, DRACH's first report to HUD (excerpted in this newsletter).

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A link to *Housing and Independence: How Innovative CILs are Breaking Down Barriers to Housing for People with Disabilities*, published earlier this year as part of the *Readings in Independent Living* series. The report includes a useful list of websites—including those listed to the left—for a variety of housing resources.

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Information pertinent to our story about housing and civil rights in which CORD director Bill Henning notes how poor housing options can lead to abuse. *People with Disabilities and Abuse: Implications for Centers for Independent Living* by Leslie Myers is a recent contribution to the *Readings in Independent Living* series.

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In our premier issue, we featured the story of Kelly Dillery, the "wheelchair mom" from Ohio. Dillery apparently continues to have trouble with sidewalk accessibility and law enforcement officials in Sandusky. And other advocates have filed suit against the town. We have links to the latest news reports.

SOURCES & RESOURCES

Here's the scoop on how to contact DRACH's regional reps. Karen Tamley and Becca Vaughn also represent DRACH on the national scene.

BILL HENNING CORD

1019 Iyanough Road #4, Rt. 132
Hyannis, MA 02601
Phone: 508-775-8300
Fax: 508-775-7022
E-mail: cordwin@capecod.net

KAREN JONES CADRACH

1068 Kaines St., #7
Albany, CA 94706
Phone: 510-526-2627
Fax: 510-558-8834
E-mail: drach@aol.com

JIM PARKER

Governor's Committee on Concerns
of the Handicapped
Lamy Building, Room 117
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: 505-827-6465
Fax: 505-827-6328
E-mail: 103203.400@compuserve.com

ELEANOR SMITH

Concrete Change
600 Dancing Fox Road
Decatur, GA 30032
Phone: 404-378-7455
Fax: 404-378-6830
E-mail: concretechange@mindspring.com

JANET STIEGLER

Access CIL
35 South Jefferson
Dayton, OH 45402
Phone: 937-341-5202
Fax: 937-341-5217
E-mail: janet@acils.com

KAREN TAMLEY

301 S. Peoria, Suite 201
Chicago, IL 60607
Phone: 312-226-5900
Fax: 312-266-2030
E-mail: karentam@accessliving.org

BECCA VAUGHN

DRACH
PO Box 1232
Topeka, KS 66601
Phone: 785-233-4572
Fax: 785-233-5072
E-mail: bvaughn@networksplus.net

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For more information, contact:

Carri George
IL NET Publications Coordinator
Independent Living Research Utilization
THE INSTITUTE FOR REHABILITATION AND RESEARCH
Mail Stop: ILRU
1333 Moursund
Houston, Texas 77030
Voice: 713/520-0232
TTY: 713/520-5136
Fax: 713/520-5785

Lex Frieden, ILRU Director
Richard Petty, IL NET Director
Laurel Richards, ILRU Training Director
Dawn Heinsohn, IL NET Materials Specialist
Kaye Beneke, Newsletter Production

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