

# THE ADVOCATOR

A quarterly newsletter for Self-Advocates

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## *Self Advocacy*

For the longest time people have set out to accomplish whatever they set their minds to. Just like me learning to drive a car, working, living on my own, and making friends . We can all do it but some of us may need a little extra help.

Let me tell you a little story. Ludwig van Beethoven is arguably the greatest composer in history. His name is as easily recognized as George Washington or Santa Claus. His talents would have earned him recognition enough, but his success despite adversity is what makes him so well known. Although Beethoven created some of the most famous symphonies, he was deaf. Beethoven gave his first public piano recital when he was eight years old. He studied music in Vienna under the guidance of another famous musician, Mozart. He was a young man in his twenties by the time he was a celebrated pianist known for his unpredictable style and improvisations. Beethoven was only twenty-six years old when he began losing his hearing. Despite this minor setback, he continued to write music and created some of the greatest pieces of art still known today. Beethoven's famous works are also the finest works of their kind in international music history; The 9th Symphony, The 5th Piano Concerto, The Violin Concerto, and Missa Solemnis.

Beethoven achieved his dream of being a famous musician despite being completely deaf during the last twenty-five years of his life. This shows us that even with a disability, we can accomplish anything we set our minds to!

Warm Regards,

George

# Consumer Corner

## Consumer Corner

I'm sure all of you work hard for your money! As usual, we are talking today about how important it is for people with disabilities to speak up. I know the majority of you watch the news and know about prices going up. We still need to speak up for affordable housing. That means talking to local government, like the mayor, and then moving up to your state senators about getting affordable housing.

I have a little story for you about an apartment building in Calgary, Canada. Construction will begin this summer on an affordable housing development in northwestern Calgary for formerly homeless people who have physical disabilities. Aurora On The Park will be located at 832 10th Street, NW in the community of Hillhurst Sunnyside. Right now an old house sits on the property. It will be demolished to make way for the 25-unit assisted living building. Many welcome the addition of more affordable housing for people with disabilities in Calgary. "Only about 1% of housing in our city is both accessible and affordable so there's just a massive gap." Some would suspect it's close to 90,000 people says Jeff Dyer, executive director of accessible housing. Dyer says he gets a call every day from someone who is in dire straits. Because of a disability, they're either trapped in their own home or they're facing homelessness. "Or, they have been recently injured, in a hospital, and have no place to go," he added.

Jason Nicholson was able to find accommodations at the 4th Dimension group home in northwest Calgary. Nicholson, who has multiple sclerosis and is in a wheelchair, has just completed a PhD in mathematics. "People, if given the right support, can do amazing things," he said.

Now, let's stop right there. I know there are those of you who are very independent and probably need very little to no support. And, some of you need a little more support. But, that won't stop you from living independently! I was inspired by this example in Calgary. We need more accessible living in Alabama. I will look into options that might be available for us! Keep up the good work!

George



## Crystal Lawley

I attended Shelton State Community College where I received two Certificates in Office Administration and Personal Training. I took exercise classes along with the Office Administration. While attending the exercise classes, I met the Director of the Wellness Center. She asked if I would be interested in working in the office as a Work Study and becoming a Personal Trainer. I gained experience in office tasks and instructing classes.

After finishing college, I had a few part time jobs which didn't last. The first one was working in a private gym cleaning equipment, minor bookkeeping, and assisting clients with their workouts. I worked there a few months. The second one was a bookstore as a secretary and clerk. I worked there for seven years. My heart was set on having a full time job. Part time was good, but it wasn't enough.

I started as a file clerk at Ability Alliance of West Alabama in 2010. The second day there, I was switched to the Admin Department 15 hours a week. In September 2010, after my job placement had ended, I was added to the payroll at Ability Alliance 25 hours a week as Administrative Assistant.

In summer of 2011, I became a full time employee. My job tasks increased over the years. Currently, I submit Service Coordination billing to the state. As of September, I will be with AAWA 10 years. It is a great accomplishment and I'm looking forward to the next 10 years.



## Upcoming Events:

Alabama APSE: August 3-5, 2022 Montgomery, AL

Please visit the link below for the latest informational webinar from the Office of Self-Advocacy.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgetWaAlNyg>

**I would like to encourage all of you to send me your success stories. It can be anything from moving into your new home, starting a new job, making a trip to buy groceries, etc. Any accomplishment that goes towards being self-reliant and having inclusion in the community is acceptable. If you send me your stories, I can put them in the newsletter to share with others and help inspire them to achieve their goals.**

**Warm Regards,  
George**

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