

You have received this e-mail because you signed up for communication from Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP). To [unsubscribe](#), please click here.



ALABAMA DISABILITIES ADVOCACY PROGRAM
September 24, 2015

The Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP) is part of the nation's federally-funded protection and advocacy (P&A) system. ADAP provides legal services to Alabamians with disabilities to protect, promote and expand their rights. ADAP's vision is one of a society in which persons with disabilities are valued and exercise self-determination through meaningful choices, and have equality of opportunity. ADAP is part of the [National Disability Rights Network \(NDRN\)](#).

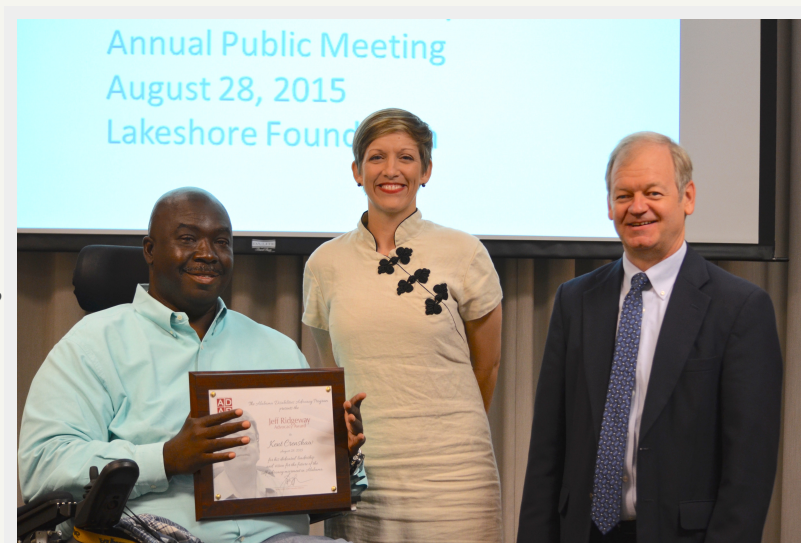
Find us on the Web
www.adap.net

Disability Legal Program at UA Announces 2015 Self-Advocacy Award Recipients

Disability advocates Kent Crenshaw and Elouise Woods were awarded the second annual “Jeff Ridgeway Advocacy Award” by the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP), the state’s federally-funded protection and advocacy legal agency for persons with disabilities housed at The University of Alabama.

The awards were presented by Amy Hinton, a member of one of ADAP’s advisory councils and Brittany Gore, President of People First of Alabama.

Crenshaw is the Executive Director of the Montgomery Center for Independent Living. In presenting the award, Hinton cited the numerous local, state and national disability policy issues in which Crenshaw is involved, including long term care concerns, assistive technology access, and rehabilitation services. Crenshaw’s work with university students was highlighted; his students say he helps them see persons with disabilities as people first, rather than



categorizing them by what society perceives they can and cannot do.

Gore traced Wood's three-decade history in the state's self-advocacy movement, starting with being a founding member and the first President of People First of Alabama, to championing the closure of the state's institutions, to her recent support of employment initiatives for persons with disabilities, an issue dear to Jeff's heart. In nominating her for the award, one of her People First peers said this of Elouise: "she knows how to speak up for people with disabilities."



ADAP solicits nominations each year for the "Jeff Ridgeway Advocacy Award," seeking persons who demonstrate leadership in self-advocacy and who have a vision for future cross-disability self-advocacy efforts in Alabama.

Part of a nationwide network of protection and advocacy agencies, ADAP's mission is to protect and promote the civil rights of Alabamians with disabilities. The agency provides technical assistance and direct legal advocacy services to eligible persons with disabilities, engages in system-change efforts, and provides training and outreach on disability-related legal matters.

Alabama Assistive Technology Expo and Conference



Auburn University will be hosting the Alabama Assistive Technology Expo and Conference (ALATEC) on October 20 & 21, 2015. The conference program will provide an opportunity to see the latest in assistive technologies, practices and services for persons with disabilities that will increase the ability of such persons to access education, employment, housing, transportation, health care and leisure/recreation in the community of choice. You can register online at www.auburn.edu/alatec

NCD Statement in Honor of National Voter Registration Day

The United States Census Bureau reports that the population of Americans with disabilities is now one in five for people between the ages of 18 and 64, totaling 56.7 million or 18.7 percent of our population.

Passed in 2002, the Help America Vote Act was designed to help Americans with disabilities



exercise their right to vote “independently and privately,” yet Rutgers University revealed in 2012 that only 15.6 million people with disabilities reported voting in the November 2012 elections.

Nearly 900 people with disabilities were queried by the National Council on Disability for NCD's October 2013 report on the “Experience of Voters with Disabilities in the 2012 Election Cycle.”

Although progress has been made, widespread problems persist. Voters with disabilities are often denied equal access to voting systems because, to a large degree, states and localities have not invested adequate resources, planning, and training to provide reliable, accessible voting technology. Many state and local governments remain non-compliant with federal law through a combination of inadequate funding, planning and training. Architectural barriers persist and even when removed, voting layouts continue to prevent voters from casting their ballots privately. Broken voting machines and election workers who are often unfamiliar with both the equipment and the legal rights of individuals with disabilities perhaps most shockingly, were “condescending or rude or... demonstrate (d) pejorative attitudes towards voters with disabilities...,” the report revealed.

Furthermore, many states sidestep voting accessibility by emphasizing absentee voting, voting by mail or curbside voting where poll workers actually meet people with disabilities at their vehicle with a ballot. Although the availability of these voting options should not be discouraged outright, neither should they become the only option for people with disabilities simply because physical and other barriers to casting a vote have been ignored, or because laws already passed have not yet been implemented.

Researchers suspect that inaccessible polling places play a major role “both by making voting more difficult and possibly sending the message that people with disabilities are not welcome in the political sphere.”

The constitutional right to vote is an invaluable cornerstone of civic participation in a democracy. So that this treasured principle does not ring hollow for millions of Americans with disabilities – a group that anyone can join at any instant – it is imperative that all levels of government recommit to ensuring our shared moral and legislative goals of full participation.

On National Voter Registration Day, NCD reasserts our collective belief that every American, including people with disabilities, as well as seniors, people living in poverty, people from diverse racial and ethnic groups and those for whom English is not their native language, should have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process.

With issues including health care, social security and even assisted suicide dominating the news and, at times, the ballot box, we’d we wise to remember, and act on, the words of Justin Dart, “Vote as if your life depended on it...because it does.”

To read NCD’s 2013 report on voting access go to:
<https://www.ncd.gov/publications/2013/10242013>

HHS and ED Release Statement on the Importance of Inclusive Early Childhood Programs for Young Children

with Disabilities

The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released a policy statement highlighting the importance of making sure that all young children with disabilities have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs. The policy statement sets a vision for states, local educational agencies, schools, and public and private early childhood programs to strengthen and increase the number of inclusive high-quality early childhood programs nationwide.

In a [guest post](#) for the ACL blog, two directors of AIDD-funded University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Mary Beth Bruder and Michael Guralnick, explain why inclusion in early childhood programs is so important to the future success of children with disabilities.

[Read more about the early childhood inclusion policy statement.](#)



DOL Clarification of Sibling Coverage for Family and Medical Leave

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave to care for their own health or for a family member who has a serious health condition. This previously excluded siblings who assumed caregiving roles. The Sibling Leadership Network (SLN) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA) have worked with the Department of Labor (DOL) to offer new guidance clarifying the eligibility for siblings to care for their adult brothers and sisters with disabilities. The DOL has issued two updated Fact Sheets and a FAQ that includes situations when siblings may be protected. The changes allow for coverage if the sibling is functioning "in loco parentis," meaning in place of the parent.

[Click here](#) to access the fact sheet. [Click here](#) to access the fact sheet.

[Click here](#) to access the FAQs.



New Mobile App Helps Find Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) new [Resource Locator](#) mobile application (app) for smartphones and electronic tablets can help you get answers to your housing-related questions. The app connects you with building managers, [public housing authorities](#) and property management companies to learn about available HUD housing, including affordable housing for people with disabilities and seniors.

Download the app in [Apple iTunes](#) or [Google Play Marketplace](#) . [Click here](#) for the link.



SHARE THIS EMAIL



WE ARE ON TWITTER



JOIN *on* FACEBOOK

*Copyright © *|2015|* *|Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program|*, All rights reserved.*

Our mailing address is:

The University of Alabama
Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program
Box 870395 - Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35487-0395
website: www.adap.net
e-mail: adap@adap.ua.edu