



## ADVOCACY IN ACTION: WHAT ARE THEY YELLING ABOUT ON WALL STREET?

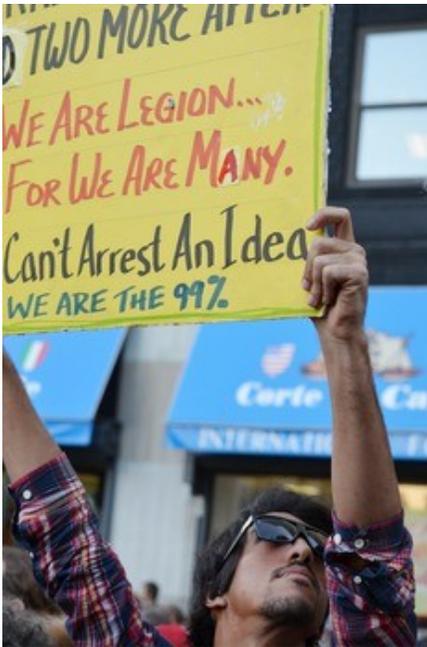
For the past few weeks, something unusual has been happening near Wall Street. People have been camping out, protesting, exchanging ideas, and talking to the media. They're in Manhattan's financial district, near the New York Stock Exchange and some of the world's richest companies.

The protesters are part of a group called "Occupy Wall Street." It was originally made up of just a few dozen people led by a Canadian activist organization called Adbusters. Occupy Wall Street has rapidly expanded. Several influential labor unions and many individuals from all over the country have joined in. The police used pepper spray on some protesters and arrested others, which drew increased media attention and new waves of supporters. On Wednesday, October 5, an estimated 10,000 people joined in a march from City Hall to Wall Street. The movement has also spread to other U.S. cities, including Los Angeles, Boston, San Francisco, Denver, Chicago, Oklahoma City, Philadelphia, and Portland.

What are these protests all about? At first, the media made it seem like Occupy Wall Street was a disorganized group lacking a unified message. And it's true that people have joined the cause for many reasons. But it's clear that the protesters' main message is that American businesses and government favor the rich. It's hard for average citizens to find financial security or to be heard. One of the big debates in U.S. politics right now is whether the very wealthy (people who make over a million dollars a year) should pay more taxes. On one side of this debate are those who look at our national debt of \$1.5 trillion and say, "Those who have made the most money should do more to help solve the problem." At least, they say, we should return to the tax rates that applied to the very wealthy under President Bill Clinton. If we returned to the tax rates of 2000, someone making a million dollars a year would owe \$32,493 more in taxes annually than they do now.

On the other side are those who say it's a bad idea to tax the rich more. Some think the rich deserve what they get, and it's just unfair to tax them at a higher rate. They also argue that big businesses and wealthy people create jobs. If they were taxed more, this argument goes, they would have less money to spend on creating jobs and paying workers. To reduce the national debt, they say, cut government spending on things like health care, education, and unemployment benefits. Many economists do not agree with this argument, and say slightly higher taxes do not curb job growth. And cutting government spending during a recession can make it worse. The more the economy slows down, the less income there is to tax. Nonetheless, this year, the House of Representatives passed a budget that included \$4.5 trillion in such spending cuts over the next decade. Whether you're a family of three or a nation of 300 million, being in deep debt means

Don't forget about National Egg Nog Day on December 24!



sacrifices will be required to turn the financial situation around. The debate about raising taxes and cutting spending mostly comes down to the question of who should make the sacrifices. Raising taxes on the wealthy asks them to sacrifice something.

The experience of the past three decades suggests that more money for the rich doesn't automatically bring jobs or prosperity to everyone else. In fact, it's often the opposite. Back in the 1970s, only a few top executives earned more than 30 times what their lower-level workers earned. Nowadays, the leaders of major U.S. corporations make about 263 times what the average American worker earns. Meanwhile, we suffered the worst recession since the Great Depression in the 1930s, and the unemployment rate is 9.1%.

How can this be? For one thing, big companies are holding on to their cash, rather than investing it in job creation. This month, the U.S. Federal Reserve reported that U.S. businesses had record cash on their books—over \$2 trillion. Big businesses have also

taken advantage of “globalization” by moving jobs from the United States to other countries where labor is cheaper. (You don't have to pay a worker in India nearly as much as a worker in the U.S., because of the lower cost of living and fewer protections for workers there.) Meanwhile, corporate taxes cover much less of the government's costs than they used to. Back in the 1940s, the federal government raised \$1.50 in taxes on business profits for every \$1 it raised in taxes on individuals. Today, for every \$1 the federal government gets from individuals, it gets only 25 cents from businesses.

In the past 40 years, corporations have grown and the people who run them have grown richer. The Occupy Wall Street protestors are upset by this growing “income gap” and by a lot of other problems they see in the United States today. They point out that the Wall Street businesses that helped create the economic recession are the ones who are suffering least from it. For example, big banks helped cause the crisis by getting people to take out loans they couldn't afford. They are doing well now partly because the government gave them a “bailout” – lots of tax money – to save their businesses from collapse when the loans weren't repaid. Many of the protestors call themselves “the other 99%” on signs and in chants. This refers to the fact that about 40% of the nation's wealth and about 25% of income is controlled by just the richest 1% of the population.



What about employment and economic opportunities for people with disabilities in this movement?

Many of the protestors are also angry about the role of money in politics. A recent Supreme Court decision gave corporations much more freedom to give money to political candidates, even in secret. Some signs downtown read: “I Can't Afford to \$peak With My Representative” and “Get Your Money Out of My Government.” A lot of protestors are upset with President Obama, who hired powerful business leaders to run the economy even though their companies

had brought about the economic crash of 2008.

**Why should you care?** More than one out of every five Americans under 18 lives below the poverty line. Many more live in families that are above the poverty line, but have little hope of paying for college or other training necessary to get a good job.

**Let me hear from you!** What do you think about the growing income inequality? Should we raise taxes on the rich? Do you feel that regular people can get heard by politicians? Should the government do something to help out people who are struggling financially? If so, how? Or is the deficit more important than funding government programs? Should taxes be kept low, and programs cut to make up the difference?



What are your thoughts about Occupy Wall Street? What lessons could you use from this to advocate for something important to you in your community?



## Why is Advocacy Important? -By Kieran McGovern

The general meaning of the word Advocacy is to stand up for and defend the rights of oneself and/or others. This could mean contacting elected officials for representation, speaking up at your IEP meeting, or checking the mall bathrooms for accessibility.

Advocacy is important for all people. We as individuals are the ultimate guards of our rights... BUT, like most things, there's a right way and a wrong way of advocating.

I would guess that most people (to some degree) are excited by the radical, rabble-rousing element of advocacy. People often overlook the fact that demonstrations, rallies, functions, etc., are the product of hard work behind the scenes

It's important for advocates to visualize the change they wish to see before acting. By visualizing change, one needs to think of the improvements they want to see. Dream it and then do it! More importantly, it is absolutely necessary to show respect. Being harsh and rude is counterproductive. It just doesn't work!

It's easy to get excited, but we must understand the seriousness of what we do and the impact it has. It is also important to pick and choose what needs advocacy. Arguing over petty matters is not good advocacy - it is often seen as bitter, dramatic and ignorant.

Remember: **ADD UP** your advocacy plan:

1. Ask questions about what is going on.
2. Determine the need - find out if something could be better or different!
3. Decide on the steps that are needed to improve outcomes.
4. Understand the pros and cons.
5. Plan your actions.

December 4 is Wear Brown Shoes Day? Take a photo of you wearing brown shoes and send it to me!

## DATING, MARRIAGE, AND TRANSITIONING TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

Originally published August 3, 2011 for Cure CMD

By Jennifer Baker (YLF Alumni, 2004)



Growing up, you always thought about what you wanted to be when you got older. And your parents always said you could do it. As you get older, you start to realize that things are a little harder than you first thought. I have Ullrich Sclerotic Muscular Dystrophy, so living on my own is a little tricky. I use a power wheelchair full-time. I need help with most of my daily needs. And I use a non-invasive ventilator. I live with my mom so that she can help me with what I need at night, and I have an aide who helps me during the day. But to a point, I am still independent.

Living on  
your own  
can be  
done.

I go to the doctor by myself. I decided to do this partly because my mom can't always take off work, and I like the fact that the doctors have to talk to me about my health, instead of assuming that I don't know what I'm talking about and only talking to my mom about it. I find it very important for the doctors to talk directly to me. It also affords me the privacy I would prefer to maintain over certain issues. There are times when I wish someone could go with me, but I guess that's part of growing up: doing these things by yourself like any other adult would. I use SoonerRide to go to and from my appointments, then I take my chair wherever it can go. As long as there's a sidewalk, I'm free.

Living on your own can be done, if you're safe about it. You must make sure that you ask the important questions, and always be honest with yourself: Are there suitable residences for disabled people? What do I need help with? Will state or private insurance cover it? Each state has a different set of rules and regulations for services and equipment.

I feel that once you have the important questions answered, though, it's your world.

Dating, however, is a different experience for everyone. It doesn't matter if you're in a chair or not. The only difference is the way you date. Some meet the people they date online, while others meet them in a public place. You can date whomever you want! In a chair or not.

I've always dated someone in a chair, not because I didn't want to date someone who could walk, it's just that the people I have always gravitated towards also happened to be in a chair. And after a while, you forget they're in a chair. You just see them, and they just see you. There are good and bad points, however, to dating someone in the same position as you: the good is that they can better understand some of the things you go through, the bad is that they're going

through the same challenges, and also striving for their own sense of independence. But when you love someone, none of that other stuff really matters anymore.

I met my husband at MDA Summer Camp. We knew each other for years before we started dating. He was also in a power chair, full-time, so when it came time to figure out living arrangements and what would be best for us, we looked at all our options. We decided it would be best for us to live with family. However, we still maintained our independent relationship and life. We went to the doctor alone, paid bills together, and still went through everything that any other married couple goes through. The only difference was we had our family a few steps away.

You just see them, and they just see you.

Every marriage sees many of the same challenges and joys. It doesn't matter if you're disabled or not. Being disabled does mean that you have a few more decisions to make together, which can make you stronger. But once you figure everything out, being married is an amazing part of life.

I've learned that you can't change your disability or the fact that you need help. But, when you have the will to do whatever you want in this life and have faith in yourself, you will succeed. Just put your mind to it, and always fight for what you want!

### NEED HELP TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY?

Centers for Independent Living (CIL), also called Independent Living Centers (ILC), came out of the Independent Living Movement led by Ed Roberts during the 1970's. People with disabilities were fighting for their rights and to access services. They wanted to choose which services were better for them and use these services while living in their community. CIL's help people with disabilities to live as independently as possible in their own homes. CIL's do this by providing various services. Each CIL has different services. The services can change based on what people with disabilities need in their community. However, at every CIL there are four core services:

**Information and Referral:** Consumers are given the information that they may need to live independently. Centers also help people become connected to different programs and agencies, such as Vocational Rehabilitation Service, that can provide assistance.

**Independent Living Skills Training:** This includes services around living independently. For example, learning how to ride the bus or figuring out how you are going to use the shower in your home.

**Peer Counseling:** Under this service, people with disabilities get advice from other people with disabilities on many different issues.

**Individual and Systems Advocacy:** With this service, people with disabilities are taught self-determination strategies.

Other services may include deaf and blind services, housing, transportation, and recreation. Centers usually have people (as part of systems advocacy) who can go with students and their parents to IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings at their school. Some centers also help youth who are going from high school to college or work to find accessible housing and PCAs (Personal Care Attendants).

Check out this website for a list of CIL's in Oklahoma: <http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/oklahoma.html>



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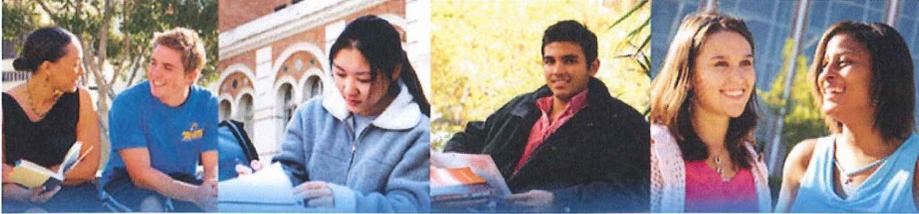
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## Get help paying for college

Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Start Here

- Start or continue your FAFSA
- Correct your FAFSA
- Check the status of your FAFSA, and more...

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the key that opens the door to receiving financial aid. Even if you are not sure whether or not you will need financial aid, it is recommended that you fill out a FAFSA anyway.

The best way to complete the FAFSA is online. Using this method is recommended because applications are processed quickly;

errors are identified right away; and online instructions are provided for each question. Applicants can even "chat" live online with a customer service representative for help. Or you can ask for help by calling (800) 4-FED-AID or visiting their website <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>.

If you prefer to fill out a paper FAFSA, you can obtain one directly from your high school guidance office, any college financial aid office, most public libraries, or the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (800) 4-FED-AID.

Remember, all of this information is free of charge; the first "F" in FAFSA stands for "Free"! Be wary of any organization that requires you to pay to fill out the FAFSA!



### Also check out:

- Fastweb: Scholarships, Financial Aid, Student Loans & Colleges: <http://www.fastweb.com/>
- OK College Start: <http://www.okcollegestart.org/home.aspx>
- Disaboom website: [www.disaboom.com/scholarships/](http://www.disaboom.com/scholarships/)
- OK-AHEAD (Oklahoma Association on Higher Education and Disability): <http://www.ok-ahead.org/scholar.html>

<http://www.jjlist.com>: JJ's List gives you the opportunity to review businesses you have visited by simply evaluating how they're doing with accessibility needs and also how disability aware they are (Were they welcoming to you? Friendly? Clean? Etc.)

JJ's List has really taken off in Illinois but it would be great to see it take off in our state so that Oklahoma businesses evaluate their own efforts. Learn more at the link provided and please consider evaluating 10 businesses before Christmas 2011 – we could easily add 1000 businesses in 2 months if everyone made this commitment! (YEP - turn in a blue card as you review businesses!)

<http://280slides.com> Create your own slide show!

<http://www.google.com> Google has some great resources for you: a calendar, email, google docs, etc. And don't forget about keeping in touch with your friends on Google+.

<http://trackclass.com> Track your classroom assignments, add notes, papers, reports.

<http://ptable.com> Need chemistry help? Check out this interactive periodic table.

<http://www.naturalreaders.com> Free text to speech program!

<http://www.shmoop.com> Study and learning guides

<http://springpadit.com> Free online notebook accessible by iPod, iPad, Smart Phones, and/or a computer.

<http://www.algebasics.com> Step by step algebra tutorials

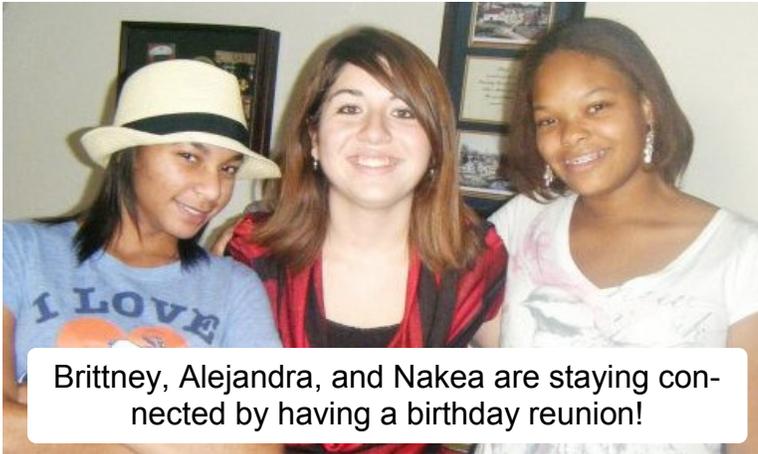
[http:// learning.snagfilms.com](http://learning.snagfilms.com) Free documentary videos

<http://prezi.com> Online presentation tool

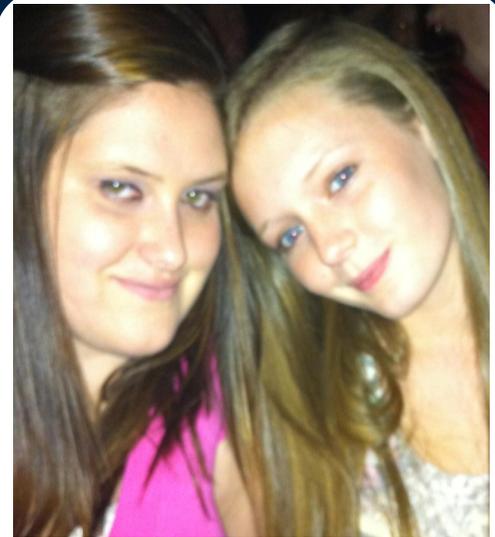
<http://okylf.pbworks.com> Our YLF Alumni webpage



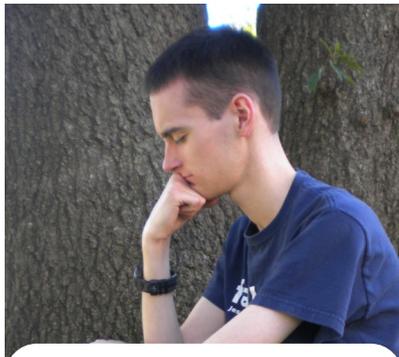
# What's up Alumni?



Brittney, Alejandra, and Nakea are staying connected by having a birthday reunion!



Katy and Andria got together at the Taylor Swift concert in Tulsa!



Matthew has been busy writing and publishing his poetry on the internet. Check them out <http://poetrypoem.com/cgi-bin/index.pl?site-name=poet303&item=all>



Aaron has been busy educating others about ATV safety.



Hannah has begun her freshman year at Rogers State University!



Brett has begun his last semester of college!



Keith has been busy photo-shopping!



Look out on the streets! Andria has started her racing career!

1. What is your full name? **Carrie Nicole Greenwood**
2. When did you attend YLF? **2001**
3. What are you doing nowadays? **I am actually serving as the Program Coordinator of the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy, which hosts the Kansas Youth Leadership Forum.**



So, I now get to coordinate this awesome program that changed my life. As the Program Coordinator, I also get to coordinate other programs within KYEA, do presentations throughout our state, and interact with youth with disabilities on a daily basis. When not working, I have a volunteer position as the state coordinator of the Ms. Wheelchair Kansas program. Between these two things, I stay pretty busy.

4. What reality show are you currently watching? **Oh wow, lots of them! I LOVE Project Runway, Dancing with the Stars, the Sing Off, and Amazing Race.**
5. What is your favorite T.V. Show? Movie? **Obviously, I like the reality shows above, but also like General Hospital, Glee, What Not to Wear, and American Idol and So You Think You Can Dance (when they are on). As far as a movie goes, my favorite movie is A Walk to Remember.**
6. What is your favorite book? **Probably my favorite book of all time is called The Seat Beside Me, but I also love any book by Karen Kingsbury.**
7. What was your favorite childhood toy? **Barbies!! I had a ton.**
8. What would people be surprised to learn about you? **Hmm... well, I guess that I like to sing. I just don't do it in front of very many people, so most don't know that I do sing.**
9. What is your proudest accomplishment? **I guess one of my proudest accomplishments would be starting the Ms. Wheelchair Kansas program from scratch. Also, every year that I coordinate our KSYLF is another huge accomplishment for me.**
10. What is your favorite moment at YLF? **My favorite moment, when I was a delegate, was probably the dance. Now that I am able to be in the facilitator/coordinator position, some of my favorite moments have been in the small group sessions. I love those moments when a delegate has an "aha" moment and they really express what they want or how the week is impacting them. Any moment that I can support and encourage one of the delegates is a highlight for me. I still love the dance too, though.**
11. Anything else you would like to say to YLF Alumni? **I really just want all YLF alumni all over the nation to know that they are a part of this bigger YLF family. I would just encourage them to be who they are and reach for whatever dreams that they have for themselves!**

1. What is your full name? **Jennifer Baker**
2. When did you attend YLF? **2004**
3. What are you doing nowadays? **Right now I'm taking a tax class. Hopefully can start taxes this year.**



4. What reality show are you currently watching? **Not really watching one now, but I did watch Big Brother!**
5. What is your favorite T.V. Show? **Probably Army Wives Movie. Nightmare On Elm Street... Anything scary I love.**
6. What is your favorite book? **Anything by Nicholas Sparks.**
7. What was your favorite childhood toy? **Barbie.**
8. What would people be surprised to learn about you? **I'm not sure. I love scary movies, but most of them scare me so much I don't want to watch them alone.**
9. What is your proudest accomplishment? **Either getting my WoHeLo from Campfire or getting something I wrote put on a website.**
10. What is your favorite moment at YLF? **Going to the Capitol.**
11. Anything else you would like to say to YLF Alumni? **That no matter what life throws at you, you can overcome it. You just have to have faith in yourself. There is always a way to get things done, you just have to be creative at times!!**



# Happy Birthday

## October Birthdays

Jessica Craft YLF'08  
Aaron Ramos YLF'09  
Dylan Drury YLF'08  
Keith Smith YLF'11  
Prince Gould YLF'09  
Katy Young YLF'10  
Kim Hoang YLF'08  
Jessica Baker YLF'08  
Dylan Wilson YLF'11  
Taylor Dunham YLF'11  
Cristina Craig YLF'09  
Truly Pettijohn YLF'07  
Rachel Hall staff

## November Birthdays

James Estes YLF'06

Kedrian Glazier YLF'08  
Kylie McFeeters YLF'04  
Chris Borden YLF'05  
Cristina Anderson staff  
Andrew Rains YLF'05  
Tiffany Priddy YLF'04  
Julie Evans staff  
Miley Cyrus

## December Birthdays

Jenny Olson YLF'06  
Joy Johnson YLF'04  
Delaney Hardimon YLF'11  
Kami Hayslip YLF'05  
Allison Jones YLF'05  
Meredith Oliver YLF'09  
Bob Heinmann staff

# NEWSLETTER CONTEST!

## WHO AM I???

Can you identify this person? Send your answers to Jen by November 30, 2011!

There are prizes for our winners!

Answers can be emailed: [jenifer.randle@okdhs.org](mailto:jenifer.randle@okdhs.org)

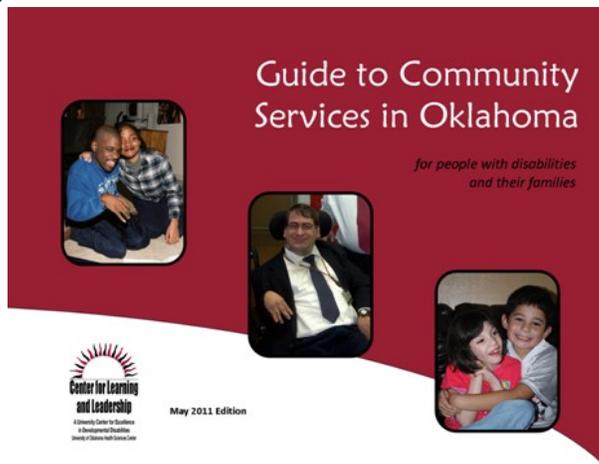
or

US Mail:

Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council  
Attention: YLF Newsletter Contest  
2401 NW 23rd Street, Suite 74  
Oklahoma City, OK 73107



# Announcements



Guide to Community Services in Oklahoma is now available to download! This guide was put together by the Center for Learning and Leadership of Oklahoma.

Download this guide here: <http://www.ouhsc.edu/thecenter/products/products.html>

This is a great guide for all advocates to have! Not only will it give you resources for yourself but it's a great tool for you to share with others!

If you do not have access to the internet and would like a copy, call me! 1-800-836-4470



The Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council worked with Newspapers in Education last spring to develop a disability awareness program for grades Kindergarten—4th grade. This program helps students understand the importance of community building through the acceptance of people with disabilities. Within this program, we teach students about creating positive communities, Braille, sign language, and assistive technology.

Download the student's supplement, teacher's edition and four additional lessons here:

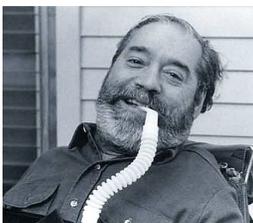
<http://nie.newsok.com/programs#place-for-you-and-me>

No access to the internet? Call me and I'll send it to you! (1-800-836-4470)



Held each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a national campaign to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many contributions of America's workers with a disability.

NDEAM's roots go back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year as "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month.



Last year, the United States House of Representatives declared January 23 as Ed Roberts Day. **Ed Roberts** was the first student with severe disabilities to attend the University of California, Berkeley. He was a pioneering leader of the disability rights movement.

So...get ready to celebrate a great man in January!

# You Lead For U

## YLF ALUMNI INVOLVEMENT & ACHIEVEMENT CARDS

### “BLUE CARDS”

Congratulations to those Alumni who have sent in one or many “BLUE CARDS”! Since the last newsletter, the number of blue cards continues to increase! Continue to share! I love bragging on the things you’re doing! Here are our blue cards turned in by YLF Alumni, as of June ‘11

YLF 2004: **2** Blue Cards  
YLF 2005: **2** Blue Cards  
YLF 2006: **0** Blue Cards  
YLF 2007: **3** Blue Cards  
YLF 2008: **0** Blue Cards  
YLF 2009: **9** Blue Cards  
YLF 2010: **24** Blue Cards  
YLF 2011: **70** Blue Cards

Remember: If you  
need more blue  
cards, let me know!  
I'll send them to you!

**You never know who you may touch by your actions.  
Get involved...Make a difference!**

Facebook is a great way to keep up with everyone...but not everyone has a facebook account or posts updates of what they're doing. So...remember -when you post something to facebook, send me a copy! I'd love to share what you're doing with all the alumni. This includes, but not limited to:

1. A short story or article you have written,
2. An online blog that you're writing,
3. Photos of you participating at a conference, volunteering in the community,
4. A poem you've written,
5. Your thoughts about an article in the newspaper,
6. A recipe you really like...

Send your submissions to Jen through email: [jenifer.randle@okdhs.org](mailto:jenifer.randle@okdhs.org)

Or through US Mail:

Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council  
Attention: YLF Newsletter Contest  
2401 NW 23rd Street, Suite 74  
Oklahoma City, OK 73107

Until next time, see ya! - Jen