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Center for Persons With Disabilities

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SILVER RIBBON DENOTES DISABILITY AWARENESS

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The silver ribbon is a symbol of disability awareness.

You may have noticed silver ribbon pins being worn on lapels lately. It is similar to the pink ribbon pins worn for Breast Cancer awareness.

It was one that I was not familiar with until I received one on my CPD Christmas card from Director Bryce Fifield with the message: “The silver ribbon represents disability awareness. We hope you wear it with pride throughout the upcoming year in support of (the) CPD mission.”

The CPD Mission statement does define what this pin represents: “We collaborate with partners to strengthen families and individuals across the lifespan through education, policy, research and services.” In other words, the work done at the CPD is all about improving the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families.

In doing some research on the background of the Silver Ribbon pins, I found out it has an interesting history.

Jean Liechty founded the Silver Ribbon Campaign in 1993 in the city of Newport Beach, California, where advocates for HIV/AIDS had used a silver ribbon symbol and experienced an incredible amount of success in the areas of reducing stigma, enhancing public support, and in obtaining funding for research regarding the HIV virus and AIDS through the Red Ribbon Campaign.

Liechty recognized that a Silver Ribbon Campaign would likely have similar outstanding results, and founding members began wearing and distributing Silver Ribbons made from gift-wrapping ribbon.

The founding committee members began selling metallic pins instead of wearing folded-over ribbons by 1997, and by September of 1999 the United States Department of Commerce issued a trademark which has established the Silver Ribbon as the official symbol for, ‘Promoting Public Awareness of the Need for Support of People with Brain Disorders and Disabilities.’

The Silver Ribbon Campaign became International in the year 2000, worn by people in Canada, Mexico, Japan, China, Singapore and India. The campaign received increased recognition through Ron Howard and his associates in 2002 when when they accepted Oscar awards for,'A Beautiful Mind,' wearing Silver Ribbons.

When you wear a Silver Ribbon pin, you are showing that

• you care about someone with a brain disorder or disability.
• you want to break down the barriers to treatment and support.
• you want to help eliminate the stigma against those who suffer.
• you want to show you believe there is HOPE through education and research.

The Silver Ribbon is now the internationally acknowledged and accepted symbol of public awareness associated with the need for support of persons with brain disorders and disabilities. As the presence of the Silver Ribbon increases, so will public support for services and research for persons with brain disorders or disabilities.

I hope that in 2010 we will see many more people proudly wearing a Silver Ribbon. I will be one of them.
The CPD's Diane Green models the silver pin.