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CPD LEGACY STORY: TOM BROWNLEE

July 19, 2010 by cpehrson

Tom Brownlee is a self-advocate from Salt Lake City and also the Chair of the CPD Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) for the next two years. I have known Tom for several years and yes, hard work and advocacy have made a great difference in our quality of life.

Gordon Richins – CPD Consumer Liaison

It all started back in 1997 when I first learned to be a self-advocate and learned to speak up for myself. It really made a big difference for me. From then on I became a stronger self-advocate and got involved in serving on boards as well as serving on councils and committees, where I think I have made a huge difference. I am now the new Chair of the CAC at the CPD and have also been chair, vice-chair and treasurer for some other organizations.

I have become a local and national speaker, as well as made a video and gotten involved in legislative advocacy. I have gone to Washington DC many times and talked to local representatives. Locally, I did the same in Utah, as well as testifying on disability related issues which has helped projects to get done.

I formed my own support team, and have lived on my own for a while and hope to again sometime. There were times I faced challenges, but got over them. Advocating for a better future for people with disabilities is what it’s all about.

I am still going strong today after 13 years of advocacy work that I have done. A true milestone for me. Growing up for me was challenging at times. Again, I met the challenges head on. I wish to thank all of my friends and family that have supported me in my efforts. I have also taught computer classes as well as designed my own webpage. I do a lot of blogging and other things on the computer.

My encouragement for other self-advocates is that you can make a difference where you live.

Just remember that "Yes, you can do it!"

Written by Tom Brownlee/leader advocate