Celebrating the Ada: Benefitting Individuals Close to Home

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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CELEBRATING THE ADA: BENEFITTING INDIVIDUALS CLOSE TO HOME

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The ADA has had a significant impact on millions of people with disabilities. Two of our CPD employees have shared some thoughts on the 20th Anniversary of the ADA:

From Mary Ellen Heiner:

One of the biggest things that ADA has done for me is that it has made my leisure time more pleasurable. I can go to stores and actually go down the aisles without knocking over items or running over clothing. I can go to movies and sporting events and know that there will be seating available for my wheelchair. Even more important, I can get my wheelchair in MOST restrooms—although there is still a lot of work to be done in that area. Places that used to have access to upper and lower-level floors via an escalator only now have elevators.

Ithas also made those who have to make the businesses compliant more aware and tolerant of those of us who have a disability—things they never thought were problems before. I’ve even had some businesses ask me to take my wheelchair into their stores/restaurants and tell them where things could be improved to make it more accessible.

From Gordon Richins:

I acquired a mobility disability 23 years ago in 1987 before there was an ADA. The ADA was signed in July 1990 and has had a great impact on the lives of individuals with disabilities. Personally I have benefited greatly from the ADA and continue to as more of the environment I function in becomes accessible.

In 1987 I had a choice between two different power wheelchairs provided by a vendor while I was in rehab following my accident. Today 20 years after the ADA was signed the choices on the market continues to grow and provides individuals with disabilities more choices on the type and quality of equipment we purchase and use. The ADA brought a stronger market for private businesses to tap into and profit from as they provide higher-quality accessible equipment and environments.

I see and benefit from this every day, as I use safe dependable accessible forms of transportation, including my personal van, taxicabs, buses, trains, boats and airplanes. Newer buildings are more accessible and safer benefiting everyone. Sidewalks and curb cuts provide safe accessibility for wheelchairs, scooters, baby strollers, shopping carts etc. which everyone benefits from and enjoys using.

The ADA provides much more than physical accessibility. The five ADA title's listed below address accessibility benefiting everyone.

1) Employment (employers with 15 or more employees)

2) Public Services (state and local government including public school districts and public transportation)

3) Public Accommodations and ServicesOperated by Private Entities

4) Telecommunications

5) Miscellaneous Provisions

This civil rights law assures the equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. Enactment of the ADA reflects deeply held American ideals that value the contributions that individuals can make when given the opportunity.