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Enjoy Life and the Holiday Season

Center for Persons With Disabilities

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ENJOY LIFE AND THE HOLIDAY SEASON

December 14, 2012 by Sue Reeves

By Gordon Richins, Consumer Liaison

Center for Persons with Disabilities

As I enjoy the holiday season, these are a few of the things I am very grateful for.

First and most important is my wonderful wife, Faustine, whom I love dearly and greatly appreciate. She has been next to me every day for 36 years of marriage—the last 25 with C-4 quadriplegia.

I am grateful for my family and extended family within the disability community.

I am grateful that, at the age of 67, I live in a time in history when communication between individuals and family members with a disability has never been easier or more effective. Our quality of life, which has been hard-fought by thousands of disability advocates over several decades, goes back to the ability to communicate, not just in our hometown, but across America and the world.

I am grateful for the tremendous progress made by universities across the nation in teaching our students and future leaders the many aspects of life with a disability in modern society.

I am grateful for the research, within the medical environment and the disability field in general, that has greatly increased the quality of life that we enjoy, and often times take for granted. As an employee of one of the 67 UCEDDs (University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities) in the United States, I have seen many examples of research and programs that have added to our quality of life, not just as individuals with disability, but society in general.

I am grateful for the many disability organizations, made up of millions of disability advocates from all walks of life. The number and breadth of organizations are too numerous to mention here, but there are a few that have worked extremely hard to improve life for people with a disability. This list is in no special order. I am involved with, and in some cases pay dues to, these organizations because I believe in their mission statements and what they do for me and all of my brothers and sisters with disability.

AUCD – Association of University Centers on Disabilities

NCIL – National Council on Independent Living

APRIL – Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living

AAPD – The American Association of People with Disability

CPD – The Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University