



AGRABILITY CHIT CHAT

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ADVOCATING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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CARM'S COMMENTS: Carmen Schacht

The theme for this month is advocacy for people with disabilities. This has always been an interesting topic. Through the years, I have come across some things that really bother me and have written many letters to advocate for people with disabilities. I have always felt that people with disabilities all need to work together. I realize that not every person has the same needs, but if we could get businesses to use a universal-type design, then everyone could use the facilities.

One of the main things that bothers me is rest rooms that businesses think are accessible, but they are BARELY usable for a lot of people with disabilities. Fourteen years ago, when I first faced my disability, there weren't accessible rest rooms, even in the big hospitals. Thankfully, this has

changed a lot. I have noticed lately that a lot of family rest rooms are being put in malls, etc. that are really nice for people with disabilities because of their universally designed features.

Another thing that bothers me is when a handicapped parking space is put on the end of an aisle with a boulevard right by it. People who use lifts, like I do, can't use it because there isn't enough room to get out. I have written several letters about this.

I would like to see businesses and contractors use more universally designed floor plans when remodeling or building so that people would know they could go anywhere and be able to get into places. Universally designed motel rooms would all be the same, etc. Through the past few years we have tried various motels to see which ones are the most accessible. I always use the comment cards to commend businesses for their universally designed layout of the rooms or to let them know what changes need to be made to be more accommodating of disabled people.

Let's all join together in the effort to advocate for people with disabilities. The more we let businesses know when things are and are not accessible, the better job they will do. (CS)

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COWBOY UP! Marcy Thomas

Brooke Turner is the Krazy Kowboy, but he never imagined that his ride of a lifetime would include a 688 mile trip by horseback in honor of his sister. His mission started when his sister, Jyl Waters, became paralyzed because of a farming accident. The lives of Jyl, her husband Don, and their children, Jake and Tara, changed forever.

Jyl and Don farm near Cumberland. In addition to the crops and livestock they raise, they also operate a DeKalb Seed Dealer business. May 4 of this year began as a normal working day for the Waters family. Jyl had been operating the forklift in their seed corn storage building for only a few minutes before passing out, falling 3 ½ feet to the floor, and sustaining injuries to C6 and C7 of her spinal cord. Jake ran inside and called 911. Jyl was rushed to the hospital where the news of her condition was given to the family. For 31 days Jyl remained in the intensive care unit at St. Joe's Hospital in Omaha, before being moved to the Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln, NE.

Jyl's tentative release date from the hospital is September 6, when her family will welcome her home. Don made the difficult decision to have a full-time care provider for Jyl, so he can continue with their farming and seed dealership businesses.

Brooke had some tough decisions too. But as any good cowboy does, he got back in the saddle and began to think of how he could help his sister. "As a big brother, I wanted to tell Jyl everything was going to be fine. And when I couldn't look her in the eye and tell her that, it ripped my heart out," he said. So late one night when Brooke was feeling helpless, he wrote a song for Jyl that talked about the love he feels for her. "Now I Know What True Love is," was the

beginning of an album that he recently recorded, called "Ridin' for the Brand."

Brooke and 100 other horseback riders are taking his show on the road by riding from Clarinda, Iowa to Nashville, Tennessee. They are stopping along the way to give concerts and to sell his new CD; donating the proceeds to research on spinal cord injuries. Several County Cattlemen Associations have joined in by donating their time and energy to serving meals with the intention of getting the word out about this worthy cause.

Brooke's journey began on Sunday, August 11, 2002 and will most likely take about 30 to 35 days to complete. For updated information and to track his long trip, visit Brooke's website at www.krazykowboy.com (MT)

SO, WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE ANYWAY?

An advocate is a person who pleads on another's behalf or is a supporter or defender. Professionals in the field can advocate, but advocacy is often more effective when it is done by an individual or family member who is dealing with the reality of a disability. Advocacy involves time and commitment and may include promoting legislative action, identifying benefits to improve quality of life, and requesting increased funding for research. Without advocates, society would not be aware of the impact disabilities have on individuals and families.

What if I don't have time to advocate?
Everyone has time to advocate. Participate in walk-a-thons or raise money for your favorite disability. Encourage and sponsor a family member to walk or run for the cause.

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What if I can't afford it?

Ask to be a volunteer. Organizations often need help registering participants or staffing an informational center at fund-raising events. Tell your friends and family about the event and ask that they pledge support. Promote your cause through groups in which you participate, such as churches, men and women's organizations, and county livestock groups.

It does not cost a penny to become a peer mentor for a newly disabled person in your community. A peer mentor sends words of encouragement, visits the individual, and offers coping strategies, or shares an activity that both find fulfilling. Iowa AgrAbility has a wonderful peer support network that is always looking for people to become involved.

How can I get others to join in my efforts in becoming an advocate?

Coming into contact with individuals who share a common cause is beneficial in many respects. You can learn from each other how to impact current legislation, raise money for a family needing an assistive device, and create public awareness about disability issues. Encourage family members and friends to join you in a support group. Be a source of information. Tell people about different events that are taking place in your community and invite them to participate. Call attention to potential changes in legislation that are taking place. Encourage others to contact their representatives with their views on impending legislation that may affect their family and friends.

RESOURCES:

Through the Looking Glass (TLG) offers empowering resources and intervention services for families with disability issues. For more information call 1-800-644-2666

(VOICE) or log on to www.lookingglass.org/

The Great Plains ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and IT (Information Technology) Center was established by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). By calling 1-800-949-4232, you can receive free and confidential assistance for questions or information on how to report a problem or file a complaint related to ADA. You can also access their website at www.adaproject.org/

The National Organization on Disability has a website that lists programs, news, and various forms of information and resources to help "change America's approach to disability." The "Get Involved" section has several feature stories on advocacy, how people have advocated, and how you as a person or family with a disability can help administrators of organizations with numerous activities. Log on to www.nod.org/

Iowa Concern Hotline is a 24-hour hotline that provides assistance and referrals for stress, legal questions, and financial concerns for Iowa families who are experiencing a crisis or change. One-on-one live chats and frequently asked questions are also featured. You can call 1-800-447-1985 for help or access the Hotline by visiting www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern/

AGRICULTURAL NEWS:

The West Nile virus has been found in 71 of Iowa's 99 counties. For more information on the effects of West Nile on individual counties, visit Iowa's Department of Public Health website at: www.idph.state.ia.us/pa/ic/WestNile.htm

For the latest farm bill information visit ISU's Farm Economics: Current Issues

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website. From this site you will be able to view the decision tools and information pertaining to the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. In addition, advanced grain marketing, farm land leasing information, and other agricultural marketing tools are given with just a click of the mouse at <http://isufarmeconomyteam.org>

The Iowa Farm Progress show will be held in Alleman, Iowa on September 24, 25, and 26. Gates open at 7:30 a.m. and close at 5:00 p.m. As you know, the Progress show only comes to Iowa every three years, so take this opportunity to visit and see what is new in Farming! See details at www.farmprogressshow.com/

WHO'S NEW?

Welcome from Marcy Thomas!

Iowa State University Extension has hired me, Marcy Thomas, as the Program Specialist for Iowa AgrAbility. I am replacing Brenda Reeves who recently relocated to North Carolina with her husband. While working on my Master of Family and Consumer Sciences degree at ISU, I worked as a graduate assistant in many different aspects of University Extension. In May of this year I finally graduated!

Along with my husband, Kent, and my mother-in-law, we raise corn, soybeans, and alfalfa, and have a cow-calf/feed lot operation south of State Center. As anyone in farming knows, there are always adventures and sometimes the best ones come at 3:00 in the morning. I could tell

several funny stories of chasing those darn Black Angus cows in the dark. Ask me sometime about chasing cows the day after Kent and I were married. It was then that I realized what my life would be like. I am always interested in learning about other farming operations, since all of them are different in some aspect. I encourage all of you to call and E-mail me with thoughts and suggestions or just to say hello! My phone number is (515) 294-8522 and my email address is mbrat@iastate.edu

AGRABILITY FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Freewheeler's AgrAbility Friends and Family

August 3, 1:00 p.m., New Hampton Library, W. Spring St.

More details later. Hope you can join us!

Southeast Region AgrAbility Friends and Family

Fourteen people attended the annual picnic at Rogers Park in Atalissa. Brats, hot dogs and Flora's delicious pork on a stick were enjoyed by all.

To find the AgrAbility Friends and Family group nearest you, call Carmen Schacht at 563-547-2932, or access: www.extension.iastate.edu/agrability/friends-and-family.html

Be sure to keep me informed of events that are taking place in your communities. E-mail me at mbrat@iastate.edu or call (515) 294-8522. (MT)

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IOWA AGRABILITY - A joint effort of ISU Extension and the Farm Family Rehabilitation Management (FaRM) Program of Easter Seals Iowa. The program can help farm family members with a disability stay in farming.

This newsletter from the Iowa AgrAbility Project will be sent monthly to AgrAbility families and other interested individuals. Please send comments and suggestions to:

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E-mail: mbrat@iastate.edu

Phone: ISU Answerline at 1-800-262-3804

TDD: 1-800-854-1658.

Web site: www.extension.iastate.edu/agrability/

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