



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JEFFERSON CO. ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE "ACAC"

Port Townsend, Washington, August 18, 2016

In accordance with the Accessible Communities Act (Chapter 215, Laws of 2010) and the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, Jefferson County has established an active cross-disability Accessible Communities Advisory Committee, (ACAC).

Toby Olsen, the Executive Secretary of the Governor's Committee on Disability and Employment in Olympia had a brilliant idea! How about the Committee access \$100 of every ticket that is given out to people in Washington State who park in accessible parking spots without a permit? The fine is a cool \$450. Secretary Olsen's idea was that every County in WA State, (through County Commissioner approval) could access grant funding for a range of projects in local communities that would develop local initiatives and activities to promote a greater awareness of disability issues and acceptance, while supporting involvement and access for persons with disabilities within their community. The legislature passed the Accessible Communities Act which gave the Committee access to the funding. Jefferson County was the first County to receive approval to access the grant funding.

Locally, the ACAC grant is overseen by Public Health on behalf of the Jefferson County Commissioners. In order to create a local Accessibility Community Advisory Committee, (ACAC), Anna Mc Enery from Public Health pulled a group of local people together who have a disability and/or work in the field, volunteer or are a parent of a child with a disability. Membership has fluctuated, but the following people are members of the ACAC; Sue Ammeter, Bonnie Bolster, Sarah Grossman, Carl Hanson, Emily Mandelbaum, Kim Rafferty, Pat Teal and Shirley Williams.

The Jefferson County ACAC applied for a grant of \$24,165 and received it. The following are a list of local projects that were funded with the goals of improving awareness, acceptance, inclusion and access for people with disabilities in our community.

- Jefferson Co Accessible Restaurant Guide
- Jefferson Co Accessible Cultural Venues Guide
- Accessible DASH Website
- Accessible Map of Port Townsend
- People First Language Rack Cards-(highlight respectful language when speaking to or writing about someone with a disability)
- Gatekeeper Outreach Rack Cards- (information on what changes in a person's behavior might indicate the need for a consultation with a resource professional)
- Service Animal Brochure-(definition of a service dog/animal in comparison to an emotional support dog/animal)
- Emergency Preparedness Brochure for the Medically Fragile- (information for those with functional and access needs where planning and a support network is critical)
- Co-Sponsored the movie Becoming Bulletproof at the PT Movie Festival
- Sponsored a free movie about disabilities at the Rose Theater called "Where's Molly" during National Disability Employment Month
- Accessible Beach Wheelchair and Walker, (housed at the Fort Worden State Park Canteen)

The beach wheelchair and the beach walker have been recently funded, (please see photos). An ACAC member who accessed a beach wheelchair on a family vacation in Florida, brought the idea forward to the group. The ACAC did research, applied for a grant and obtained approval from the Governor's Committee to buy a beach wheelchair and beach walker for Jefferson County. The walker and wheelchair are housed next to the Canteen at Fort Worden and you can check them out for free! The PDA at Fort Worden has been a wonderful partner.

People with disabilities continue to face barriers that could be easily eliminated, but in the short time the ACAC has been in Jefferson County we have seen the positive effects of this opportunity. When people who have disabilities are welcomed and included in all aspects of our communities, everyone benefits.

For additional information about the Accessible Community Advisory Committee, (ACAC), or if you have an idea about a project, please contact Sue Ammeter the Chair of the ACAC at 437-7916 or you can send an email to amcenery@co.jefferson.wa.us



Photos of Jack McCreary by Carol McCreary



Photos of Cammy Ellard and Brandon Ellard



Beach Walker in front of Canteen