



Human Rights for All...No Exceptions

Remembering Matthew Shepard ~

Lucia Guzman - Executive Director



Matthew Shepard was a gay man who lived in Wyoming and in 1998 was brutally killed because of his sexual orientation. It was a hate crime that made headlines around the world.

The Matthew Shepard Foundation was established after his death and his mother, Judy Shepard, is the president of this meaningful foundation where their primary mission is *“to support diversity programs in education and to help youth organizations establish environments where young people can feel safe and be themselves.”*

Judy Shepard has spoken nationally and locally against hate crimes. She has also testified at Congressional hearings in support of federal hate crime bills.

The Matthew Shepard Foundation’s 7th Annual *Bear to Make a Difference* award’s dinner was held on Saturday evening, March 29th.

I was privileged to be there. As I spoke with Judy Shepard I was struck by how she does not show the face of hate, nor resentment. I saw only the personhood of a mother, who loved her son, who lost him in such a hurtful way, but who is quietly determined to end hate and bigotry. Judy and the foundation’s long standing goal should be the goal of each of us: *“To replace hate with understanding, compassion and acceptance.”*

Acts of hatred and bigotry are committed each day; some are blatant and some go unseen except for those who are the victims. Today, there is even more reason for each of us to reach out, to educate ourselves, and our families about our diverse communities. We must be as dedicated as Matthew’s mother. We must take the injustice and find a way to demonstrate justice.

For more information on the Matthew Shepard Foundation please visit www.matthewshepard.org website.

Limited English Proficiency ~ *Karen Fox, HRCR Graduate Intern*



Based on the 2000 Census, 27% of the population in the City and County of Denver uses a language other than English at home. Of these, 49.4% speak English less than “very well,” and approximately 8% (or 18,900 households of Denver households) are linguistically isolated. (Linguistically isolated is defined as a household where no member of the household 14 years or older speaks English only nor speaks English “very well.”). Of those speaking a language other than English, Spanish is the most common language spoken followed by Vietnamese. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of those who speak a language other than English speak Spanish, and 3% speak Vietnamese.

In recognition of the need to better serve individuals whose primary language is not English, members of the Agency for Human Rights and Community Relations’ staff have begun working with members of the Office of Economic Development, Department of Human Services, and 3-1-1 to design a limited English proficiency Language Access Plan (LAP). The impetus behind the project was a federal mandate to establish an LAP (Executive Order 13166). However, the committee members are working to not merely fulfill a mandate but rather to truly assess how different agencies can better serve limited English proficient (LEP) individuals.

The committee is utilizing federal guidelines and previously developed LAP’s to identify what the plan should include. The federal guidelines outline that a LAP should incorporate a four factor analysis consisting of:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons served or likely to be encountered based on the demographics of the constituency.
2. The frequency with which LEP persons using a particular language come into contact with the department
3. The nature and importance of the programs/services being offered to the person’s life.
4. The City’s resources available and the costs of providing meaningful access.

Additionally, the committee will be surveying City departments to find out more information about their experiences with working with limited English proficient individuals.

HR/CR would like to thank the committee members for their hard work on this project and hopes that this is just the beginning of many future collaborative efforts to better serve the diverse constituency of the City.

Narrow the Pay Gap ~ *Chaer Robert, Director of the Women's Commission*




Colorado women earn annually approximately 79 cents to each dollar Colorado men earn. The racial and ethnic gap is even larger. An average African American male working full-time and year-round earns 69% of what an average white Coloradan male earns. A Latino worker earns 58%. African American women earn 61% and Latina workers average only 52% of what a white male worker earns.

Why is that? The reason for the discrepancies could be occupational differences, previous work experience, marital and family status, union membership, educational attainment, negotiating practices and discrimination.

A new report: *Fulfilling the Promise: Closing the Pay Gap for Women and Minorities in Colorado* by the Colorado Pay Equity Commission analyzes Colorado data. It outlines how narrowing the pay gap helps businesses and the public interest. The report offers fourteen recommendations for how Colorado can narrow the pay gap. To download the report, go to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's website: <http://www.coworkforce.com/PayEquityReport.pdf>

Meanwhile, the State Legislature has approved a modest measure related to equal pay. Senate Bill 122- **The Wage Transparency Act** -by Senator Sue Windels and Representative Terrance Carroll would allow workers to share their own wage information. Currently, some businesses require employees to sign confidentiality agreements or otherwise prohibit or discourage employees from discussing their pay with one another. An employer can discriminate without consequence if employees are prohibited from gaining the information they need to document discrimination. Senate Bill 122 does not require employers to reveal anyone's pay. ***It merely prevents employers from retaliating against employees who share their own wage information.***

To view the Wage Transparency Act click [here](#)

 <p>DENVER WOMEN'S COMMISSION</p>	<p>Please join us at the <i>Equal Pay Day Rally and Press Conference</i> Tuesday, April 22, 2008 West Steps State Capitol Building Noon- 1:00 p.m.</p> <p><i>The Denver Women's Commission is part of a Coalition working to close the pay gap</i></p>
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Interacting with People with Disabilities ~

Lorrie Kosinski & Laureen Ferris—Office of Disability Rights



Many non-disabled people feel uncomfortable around individuals with disabilities. Although the American Disability Act (ADA) will knock down many barriers, the law cannot eradicate invisible attitudinal hurdles. As a result, ADA and sensitivity training are crucial. Sometimes, individuals avoid people with disabilities or exhibit awkwardness. Much of this discomfort stems from misunderstanding and a lack of contact with people with disabilities

Suggestions on interacting with people with disabilities

- ◆ Do not equate speech or other impairments with intellectual limitations. Adults should always be treated as adults.
- ◆ Feel free to offer assistance to a person with a disability, but do not automatically assume that the person needs assistance. **Wait until the offer is accepted.** Then, the individual can let you know what action they prefer.
- ◆ Look directly at an individual with a disability when addressing him or her, even if a companion or sign language interpreter is present. Avoiding eye contact sometimes increases tension. In addition, deaf people may be trying to lip read.
- ◆ Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person with a disability to finish a sentence or complete a task. Let the person with the disability set the pace in walking or talking.
- ◆ When conversing with a person who has difficulty speaking, do not interrupt or finish sentences for that person. Consider asking questions that require short answers or can be answered by nods of the head.

- ◆ When meeting a person with a visual impairment, always identify yourself and anyone else who may be with you.
- ◆ When conversing with a wheelchair user or a person of short stature, try to be seated to facilitate eye contact, and be aware if you are standing near them in tight surrounding, and think about what is” eye level” to them.
- ◆ When speaking to a hearing-impaired person who can lip read, be sure to stand in a well-lighted area, and keep hands, cigarettes and food away from your mouth when speaking.



Preferred Terms:

Instead of using: Handicap

Substitute: Disability

Instead of using: Handicapped person

Substitute: Disabled person

Instead of using: Normal, healthy, able-bodied

Substitute: Nondisabled

Instead of using: Disease, defect

Substitute: Condition

Instead of using: Confined to a wheelchair

Substitute: Wheelchair user

Instead of using: Visually impaired

Substitute: Blind

Instead of using: Hearing impaired

Substitute: Deaf



Footnote: Some information provided by AFSCME

Diversity Day Celebration - *May 18, 2008, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*



Diversity Day at Emily Griffith Opportunity School is a unique event that showcases the depth and breadth of the cultures represented in Denver. For one day, Opportunity School is transformed into a cultural display of textiles, crafts, native dress, music, dance, and food from around the globe. Students spend weeks planning and preparing for the event and generously give what little money they have to make sure the day is both beautiful and authentic in every detail.

Each year, approximately 800 people attend the popular Diversity Day festivities, including business leaders, City Council members, families, students, and visitors to the downtown area. Since its inception in 1995, Diversity Day has routinely received media coverage in places such as Channels 2, 4, 14 and the Rocky Mountain News and Denver Post.

Emily Griffith Opportunity School has been the hallmark of quality adult education for 92 years. Over 1.6 million students have improved themselves, their lives, and our community through the school's 350 course offerings.

Join us to celebrate the differences which make us interesting to one another and the similarities which allow us to build a bridge to understanding!

For more information contact: Slavica Park
Dean of Instruction/ESL
720-423-4751
Slavica_park@dpsk12.org

Service Animal Trainers Needed! ~ *Dale Coski, Office of Disability Rights*



Have you ever seen a dog assisting someone with a disability? Have you seen them assisting someone in their daily tasks? Do you wonder how they became an assistance dog?

It could be with the help of a person like YOU!!

Volunteer puppy raisers are needed by Service Dog Organizations. The base requirements for puppy raisers include raising the puppy for 18 months and attending scheduled training classes with other puppy raisers.

People's lives are enhanced by a service dog, and the people with big hearts who raise service dogs-in-training help create that change. **Raise a dog and change a life!** Call Dale at 720 913-8482 to learn more about being a volunteer puppy raiser.



The 2008 Democratic National Convention Happenings! ~

Ed Neuberg, Director of the Office of Disability Rights

It seems like it was just yesterday when the City of Denver was given the honor to hold the 2008 Democratic National Convention (DNC). Now we are in the middle of planning for this great event. Many things have been accomplished and many, many more still need to be done.

I am happy to announce that the DNC Host Committee has hired a Disabilities Coordinator, his name is David Kennedy. David brings a wealth of ADA experience to the table. He also has a strong ability to organize and get things done. David is currently working hard at getting “plugged in” to all the proper channels. He is busy exploring ways to better serve the disabled community during their stay here in Denver.

Transportation for people with disabilities during the convention seems to be a common theme on most people’s minds. The Denver Office of Disability Rights, along with the DNC, has identified numerous service providers with the ability to transport people with disabilities. The flip side to this is that they have also identified several areas where transportation could be a challenge.

Challenges in cost, availability, and response time are a few issues that need to be worked on in the coming months. Denver’s 311 system and the launching of our new website “Mile High Accessibility” hold huge promise in providing services and resources to the disabled travelers visiting at convention time.

Other items that are being explored are the use of pedicabs for the mobility impaired and disability awareness trainings for volunteers, hotel personnel, and transportation providers.

As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions on how to make the convention more accessible for people with disabilities do not hesitate to contact our office at 720.913.8480.



Pictured above: Ed Neuberg and Steve Meyer of Mile High Pedicabs

**CITY & COUNTY OF DENVER
AGENCY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY
RELATIONS**

Upcoming Events

CPR Class for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People

Denver Parks & Recreation

Saturday, May 17, 2008

The Westin Tabor Center, Denver

For more information contact Lorrie A. Kosinski at

720.913.8487 or lorrie.kosinski@denvergov.org

*Celebrate the United Nations Day in Support of
Victims of Torture*

Sunday, June 22, 2008

Time and place to be announced soon!

HOW TO REACH US

Agency for Human Rights & Community Relations

Main Number - 720-913-8450,

www.denvergov.org/humanrights

- ◆ **Denver Anti-discrimination Office**
720-913-8458, www.denvergov.org/discrimination
- ◆ **Denver Office of Disabilities Rights**
720-913-8480, www.denvergov.org/disabilities
- ◆ **Denver Women's Commission**
720-913-8465, www.denvergov.org/women
- ◆ **Office of Community Support**
720-913-8471,
www.denvergov.org/communitysupport
- ◆ **Denver Office on Aging**
720-913-8477, www.denvergov.org/aging



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