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GCDP REPORT

Austin, Texas

February 1987
Government Publications
Texas State Documents

Exhibit Honors Texans with Disabilities

✓ APR 8 1987

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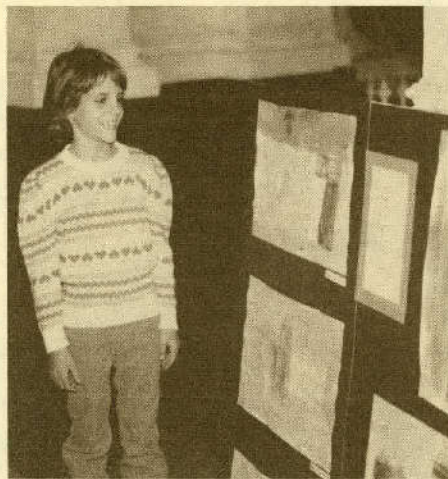
A colorful exhibit with more than 2,000 pieces of artwork prepared by special education students from around the State captured the spirit of Sesquicentennial Day for Disabled Texans. The festivities stressed the importance of independence for all Texans and particularly focused on the talents of young Texans with disabilities.

The Council on Disabilities sponsored the day at the State Capitol Rotunda on Saturday, December 13. "This celebration is a time for all Texans to remember the brave men and women who fought for our independence," said Walter Musler, chairman of the Council's sesquicentennial event. "It is also a time to dedicate ourselves to the removal of barriers which impair a disabled person's search for complete independence."

Justin W. Dart, Jr. newly appointed Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration offered these words, "We stand at an historic crossroad. What we do now will impact the lives of millions of Americans and hundreds of millions of persons with disabilities throughout the world for generations to come. We have an inescapable responsibility to take positive action. We must have the courage to rise above politics, personality and turf — and to unite. We must join together to create, advocate and implement a firm foundation for lives of productivity, quality and dignity for all our children's children."

Musical entertainment for the event was provided by the Austin State School Band and the Song in Sign Group of the Texas School for the Deaf. Comprised of twelve high school students from across the State, the signing choir members all have varying degrees of hearing loss and their performances include sign language movements blended with rhythmic dancing. Carol Huntley, director of the group, says, "The choir creates images in sign language and dance movement to a variety of recorded music, from rock to folk."

Master of ceremonies for the event was San Antonio media personality Glenn Hartman. Feature presentations were given by Mayor Frank Cooksey;
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One Texas student admired several art entries which had been created with watercolors.

DID YOU KNOW?

How much can you save with self-service gas pump prices? A lot, in fact if you take your savings from four fill-ups at self-service prices you can almost pay for that fourth fill-up with the difference. Now, at all company owned Exxon stations any "disability" tag gets you full-service at self-service prices. This is available only at company owned stations which have both full service and self-service. In many instances, the pumps will display an international access symbol. Exxon also encourages dealer operated stations to offer the service. For more information about stations in your area contact Charles Larry, Special Assistant for Consumer Affairs, Exxon, 713-656-3512.

The Department of Education's National Institute of Handicapped Research (NIHR) has established a program to aid disabled persons unable to live independently because of inaccessible housing. NIHR will fund projects to develop housing and other building design criteria from which modular components for living environments (including furnishings) can be constructed to enable disabled people to live as independently as possible. The criteria will apply to new construction or retrofitted existing structures. For information contact, Joseph Traub, NIHR, Mailstop 2304, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 202-732-1189.

A recent El Paso Court of Appeals decision reflects a growing acceptance at all levels of Texas Government for the need to open our neighborhoods to family-style homes for persons with mental retardation. This decision supports the national trend from institutionalization to community living for persons with mental retardation. The Court of Appeals ruled on December 31, 1986, that a group home for six adults with mental retardation would not violate a deed restriction in an Odessa subdivision, thus clearing the way for the home to open. For more information contact Advocacy, Inc., at 512-454-4816 or toll free 800-252-9108.

IS YOUR POLLING PLACE ACCESSIBLE?

Federal law now requires all 6,512 Texas precinct polling places used in the General Election to be accessible to individuals with disabilities and the elderly. The law requires the Secretary of State's Office to determine the number of accessible and inaccessible polling places in the State and to document the reasons for any instance of inaccessibility.

A report is being compiled by the Secretary of State's Office and will be submitted to the Federal Elections Commission before the end of January, 1987. Sharon Hanko, director of the legal section, Office of the Secretary of State, released the following information which relates geographically to the 18 local mayor's committees throughout the State.

LOCAL COMMITTEE	COUNTY	PRECINCTS <i>(Numbers do not include absentee)</i>	RESPONSE	
			<u>Accessible Polling Places</u>	<u>Non Accessible or no response</u>
Austin	Travis	175		No report submitted
Beaumont	Jefferson	93		No report submitted
Bryan-College Station	Brazos	40		No report submitted
Corpus Christi	Nueces	122		No report submitted
Dallas	Dallas	455	460 Accessible	7 Not accessible
Denton	Denton	61	100% Accessible	
El Paso	El Paso	99	100% Accessible	
Fort Worth	Tarrant	346	304 Accessible	42 Not Accessible
Harris County	Harris	661	621 Accessible	41 Not Accessible
Longview	Gregg	22	100% Accessible	
Mineral Wells	Palo Pinto	19	100% Accessible	
San Angelo	Tom Green	44	100% Accessible	
San Antonio	Bexar	283	100% Accessible	
Sweetwater	Nolan	9	100% Accessible	
Temple	Bell	40		No report submitted
Texarkana	Bowie	41		No report submitted
Tyler	Smith	59	49 Accessible	11 Not Accessible
Waco	McLennan	82	82 Accessible	1 Not Accessible

A variety of reasons were given for instances of inaccessibility of the polling places. Sharon Hanko says, "The most common reasons stated were lack of ramps, curb cuts, and narrow doors." For information about specific precincts contact Sharon Hanko at 1-800-252-8683.

Symposium Slated for Mayor's Committees

Representatives of local mayor's committees are especially invited to attend a special one-day symposium for officers and subcommittee members on March 26, 1987. The session, entitled "Employment and the Mayor's Committee... a Symposium," will be held at the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center, 4800 North Lamar in Austin from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

The morning session will feature information about effective Mayor's Committee administration and organization. Topics will include subcommittee structure, membership development, fund and resource acquisition and tax exempt status.

The morning session will be

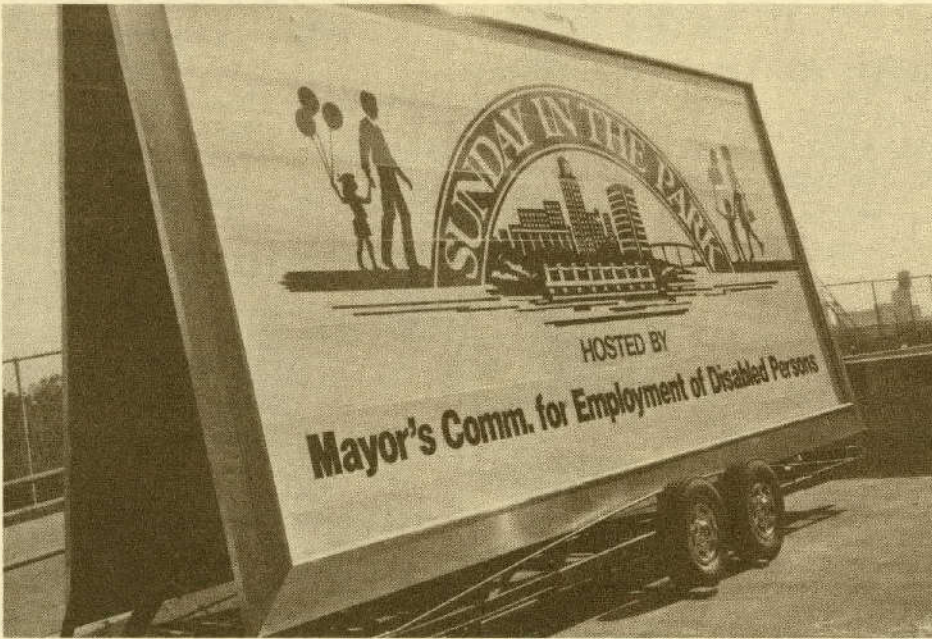
keynoted by Steve Johns, director of Handicap Services, City of Dallas, a former staff member for Project LINK Job Bank, an active member of the Dallas Mayor's Committee and a dynamic disability advocate.

The Symposium luncheon will feature the executive director of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, Jay Rochlin of Washington, D.C. Featuring topics of interest to employers, the afternoon session will include three topics that can be easily disseminated by the mayor's committee on the local level. They will include information for employers and service providers for disabled persons regarding industries

with a stronger than average labor demand—promising better job prospects for the disabled worker, information which helps employers curb the high cost of worker's compensation insurance and a program on emergency planning for workers with disabilities.

The day will end with a reception for local committee representatives and tours of the Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center.

For further program or registration information contact the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons, 118 E. Riverside Dr., Austin, Texas 78704, 512-445-8276.



Sunday in the Park hosted by the Beaumont Mayor's Committee

Many Beaumont citizens participating in Sunday in the Park held last October, learned that blind persons can play baseball. Christia Bobb, a fifth grader at Price

Elementary School in Beaumont, was especially pleased at this new information and she thanked the Beaumont Mayor's Committee for hosting the demonstration game of beep

baseball. She was impressed that the players did not let their disability prevent them from having fun.

Beaumont Mayor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons sponsored the event which brought together a broad cross section of Beaumont citizens to enjoy an afternoon of fun. Arts and crafts were displayed by individuals with disabilities. Other activities included pony rides and face painting. Also, Kids on the Block, a popular puppet show, was performed to help children become aware of the special needs and abilities of children who are physically disabled.

Sunday in the Park is a program designed to encourage use of the city's downtown park area. There is no admission and each week a different group sponsors activities. By hosting this event the Beaumont Mayor's Committee was able to promote a better understanding of persons with disabilities in a positive and meaningful way.

Goals of the Beaumont Mayor's Committee are to seek better employer understanding concerning employment of persons with disabilities; increased employment, retention, and advancement of disabled workers; and better understanding of and encouragement to use rehabilitation training and placement services available to persons with disabilities.

Dallas Workers' Compensation Symposium

... employer attendance reaches all time high

The Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) is sponsoring a number of Symposiums across the State dealing with workers' compensation. In the late fall a Symposium was held in Dallas at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza. The 299 employer representatives participating from the Dallas/Fort Worth area were given an overview of workers' compensation in Texas. Speakers addressed timely issues including *Hiring the Previously Injured Employee*, *Your Rates—What the Law Really Says*, and *The Injured Worker and Reemployment*.

"The Texas Rehabilitation Commission has found this to be the best way to talk to employers about hiring

individuals with disabilities," said Delvin Sparks, a TRC program specialist. "This symposium targeted individuals with back injuries. As a followup to each Symposium personal contacts are made with participating employers and the results have been very encouraging."

The Dallas Symposium was co-sponsored by the Dallas Mayor's Committee for Employment of the Disabled, The Dallas Personnel Association and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission.

Plans are underway to hold a similar Symposium in the San Antonio area. Co-sponsors for that event are the San Antonio Mayor's Committee

for Disabled Persons, the San Antonio Personnel Association, the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Scheduled for Friday, March 6, the San Antonio Symposium will be held at the Wyndham Hotel, 9821 Colonnade.

Additionally, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission is finalizing arrangements to hold a Symposium in Galveston on March 20 and another in the Houston area this fall.

For program or registration information contact Delvin Sparks, TRC program specialist, in Austin at 512-445-8287.

The Question is: Are Texans ready for a tax raise in 87?

(Excerpt from Capitol Update, State Comptroller's Office)

A new survey shows a majority of Texans are willing to pay higher taxes for improving state services. The survey released by the University of Texas at Austin found only 2.6% of 673 Texans surveyed would not be willing to pay higher taxes for better government services.

Texans were asked: "Would you be willing to pay additional taxes to fund

government activity?" (percentage listed of those answering yes)

No services.....	2.6%
Unemployment aid.....	35.7%
Aid to poor.....	48.5%
Crime victims aid.....	69.5%
Public education funding.....	69.5%
Crime protection.....	72.5%
Aid for elderly and disabled	76.2%

Texans were asked: "Which revenue raising method would you choose?"

Don't know.....	5.7%
User Fee.....	7.5%
Personal income tax.....	8.5%
Corporate income tax.....	9.2%
Pari-mutuel betting.....	16.4%
State lottery.....	35.0%

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Walter Musler, chairperson of the Council on Disabilities Sesquicentennial Task Force; Judge Bob L. Thomas of Waco, chairman of the Council; Justin W. Dart, Jr., commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration in Washington, D.C.; Margaret A. Nosek, chairperson, Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons; and Bob Kafka, president of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities.

"As we draw to an end of this great Sesquicentennial observation, we want to remind all citizens of the role persons with disabilities have played throughout our State's history and create greater public awareness of the role citizens with disabilities play in our communities, the work place and throughout society," said Terry Goodman, executive director of the Council.

GCDP Report

The GCDP Report promotes employment and public awareness of the abilities and special needs of persons with disabilities. This quarterly GCDP Report is published by the Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons.

Communications may be addressed to: Cindy Counts, Editor, GCDP Report, 118 East Riverside Drive, Austin, Texas 78704. You may also call (512) 445-8741 VOICE or TDD.

Taped copies of the GCDP Report will be provided upon request.

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Note: The Texas Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons is in compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is an equal opportunity employer.

Slots Open in Computer Programmer Training Course

The Dallas Computer Programmer Training Course at El Centro College coordinated by the Dallas Mayor's Committee for Disabled Persons, is now accepting inquiries and applications for students to enroll in its August, 1987 class.

For information and application materials about the one year program, please contact Barbara Bernhard, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, 5510 Abrams Center, Suite 115, Dallas, Texas 75214, 214-692-1665.

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