



DRS

Connection

Winter 2009

News and views promoting independence for people with disabilities

Volume 10
Issue 1

Portraits of Independence

Individuals cherish freedom of new apartments

Accessible Space, Inc. (ASI) opened its Fort Collins Harmony Road apartments in August 2008 with twenty-three accessible apartments for low-income adults with physical disabilities.

This is just one in a range of options for independent living available to people with disabilities. Listen to three residents who shared their appreciation for living here and you'll get a sense for how independent living takes different shapes for different people. These DRS clients value the opportunity living here affords them and find their individual apartments suit them well.

One of the first to move in was

long-time DRS client Lynn Jensen, who is in his mid-40's and has muscular dystrophy. Lynn lived most of his life in Timber Ridge on S. Taft Hill with his mother, Maxine, and his brother, Lee



Lynn Jensen

Wray. His mom died a year ago, and his brother died in May. Suddenly, Lynn found himself on his own, in a home he could not afford to keep on one income.

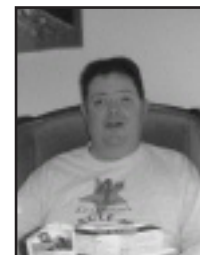
He did not want to move into assisted living or a nursing home. With help from his social worker and his sister, he applied to ASI for

one of the apartments. His DRS case manager wrote a letter of support. ASI approved his application.

Lynn loves his life of freedom. He can do what he wants, when he wants, providing, of course that he is home when his care givers arrive! Human Services contracts with the agency, Joy Medical Services, to give Lynn personal care, cooking services and housekeeping services.

"It's the best place!" said Lynn. "I had my family taking care of me. Then I learned I need to take care of myself and only call for help if I really need it. Now I'm living on my own, and I'm happy. I get the chance to try things on my own. Here I can be free."

Just down the hall from Lynn



Kit Callaghan

lives Kit Callaghan. Independence for Kit takes a slightly different form from Lynn's, as Kit does not need help in his apartment. He recently moved to Colorado, with his family, from Washington, D.C., finds

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Accessible Space, Inc. sponsors this issue of "DRS Connection" newsletter

DRS is grateful to ASI for sponsoring this issue of the newsletter and is pleased to profile three clients who chose to live there.

Harmony Apartments is the second ASI development in Colorado, after Longmont. Next in the pipeline will be a development in Greeley. (See the separate insert). There are many other ASI sites all over the U.S., all providing housing for low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

DRS grateful for success of 2008 first annual A Stellar Event breakfast

Disabled Resource Services undertook a new marketing and fund-raising strategy in 2008, and our effort ended on high notes. We are amazed and grateful and look forward to ongoing success. Ultimately people with disabilities who use our services benefit from the success of these efforts.

In March 2008, the agency began offering one-hour tours to the public called Discovering Disabled Resource Services. The tours provide an opportunity for people to come learn about the agency's mission and work. Tours are scheduled for 2009.

Disabled Resource Services successfully held a new kind of fund-raising event—our first annual “A Stellar Event” fund-raising breakfast. We thank everyone who spent the early morning hour Nov. 12 at the Fort Collins Hilton with us to celebrate DRS's mission. As of Dec. 11, the breakfast had raised over \$53,000 in gifts and multiple-year pledges for general operating support. In a year when the world economy was in serious recession, guests nonetheless responded generously to our request. Words are not enough to express our gratitude to the table hosts and their guests.

Board member Deborah Hayes read her original poem for the program invocation.

Rick Robertson introduced the agency's new Society for Independent Living which has three levels of five-year giving: Giver of Knowledge (\$1,000 for 5 years), Designer of Support (\$10,000 for 5 years), and Mentor of Independence (\$25,000 for 5 years).

There are many others to thank: Event sponsor, La Mesa Controls, Inc.; Keyholder thank-you-gift sponsor Osthetic Prosthetic Solutions, LLC; graphic design sponsor Biostration; print sponsor Wise River Companies, Inc.; Jenny Miller who provided sign language interpretation; Wil Huett, video narrator; and everyone who was filmed and interviewed for the video, which was shown at the breakfast, whether or not you made the final cut.

The video was created by Paul Anderson and Aaron Burns of Paul L. Anderson Productions, Inc., which provided DRS with a generous discount for their services. The company was a 2008 Platinum Ava Award (Audio Visual Award) recipient for this video. Ginny De Herdt said, “Paul and Aaron captured just the right tone to get our message out.”

Our Sustainable Funding Team. (Deborah Hayes, Karen Hutchinson, Sylvia Wesolowski, Marcella Young; Marj Grell, Nancy Jackson, and team leader Ginny De Herdt)--a mix of board, staff, and volunteers--has been working diligently since February 2008 and is seeking additional members to join their efforts in 2009.

For tour information or to sign up to help in 2009, please contact Ginny at 970-556-7435 or at drsdonorservices@frii.com.

Profile of Independence *continued from page 1*

Colorado more relaxed than the capital and loves the beautiful scenery and weather here. His sister lives just down the road,

and his parents live in Loveland.

Kit was working in Chicago for a financial firm when he was mugged in the street 15 years ago and received a head injury. He had lived on his own in a Section 8 apartment back east, but loves living in an apartment here. “You can't beat it for the money!” He has also made friends here. “The people in the building are really friendly. I'm friends with everyone I meet.”

Another resident, Kimberlee Reed, has Multiple Sclerosis and



Kimberlee Reed

uses a wheelchair. She stayed in a nursing home several months to deal with an exacerbation of her condition. Upon her discharge, she was able to move into an ASI apartment here, with services coming in to assist her. She too loves this place which she described as the most accessible apartment she has ever lived in. “The location is great: everything I need is close. It's very quiet and the people are friendly. But I'm left alone if I want to keep to myself.”

Please let us know...

if you are receiving this newsletter for the first time and do not wish to receive future copies. You can request to be taken off the mailing list. Please contact Ginny at 970-556-7435 or drsdonorservices@frii.com.

Newsletters are also available as PDF files from www.fortnet.org/drs.

How accessible is your church?

Churches, believe it or not, are not covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. But modern buildings, obviously, are built to code, so are much more accessible than older buildings.

DRS receives questions from time to time about possible funding sources for helping to build ramps, and so on, but there are none. Congregations must fund their improvements if they want to reach out to people with disabilities. This tends to result in uneven accessibility.

For example, one church

Computer corner

Web sites can keep hearing impaired and Deaf informed

The internet is a greater resource than ever for people who are deaf and hard of hearing to stay connected. Here are some samplings.

Check out the local blog FookemBug at www.fookembug.wordpress.com. You'll find information about local, national and international Deaf issues.

Another website is www.coloradodeaf.com where you can find a calendar of events for Deaf people and the ASL users.

To learn about different events in the Deaf community in sign language visit www.rmdeafnews.com. They recently went through the Colorado "Blue Book" in ASL and signed all of the proposals in the recent election.

Finally, if you just want to learn more about American Sign Language you'll appreciate www.aslpro.com, where you can find signs to any word you can think of!

attended by a couple of DRS staff advertises itself as "handicapped accessible." This means a wheelchair user can enter the building, get up to the altar rail, and get out. Woe betide anyone who wants to use the restroom!

However, this church does reach out to people with hearing impairments by providing personal amplifiers for use during services. Accessibility, after all, does mean accessibility for people with many different handicaps.

Resurrection Fellowship a church in Loveland, is particularly deaf-friendly and has signers at all services and large screen TV with captioning at one service per Sunday. It also offers classes to teach signing.

We would like to hear from you about your church: How accessible (or not) is it to the whole community? What efforts are being made to include people with disabilities? Perhaps in a future newsletter we can feature your church.

Vision Matters is coming soon

DRS's Seniors with Low-Vision/Blindness program will have its sixth annual seminar on March 27, 2009, co-sponsored with the Ensign Vision Rehabilitation Center in Fort Collins.

"Nutrition and its Impact on Age-Related Eye Diseases" will be the focus. This seminar in Northern Colorado offers the latest in adaptive equipment and technology, low-vision/blind services, hands-on displays and much more.

Cost, including lunch, is \$10. For more info, or to register, contact Karen at 407-7095, ext. 328.

Meals on Wheels can help people with disabilities

It is not just homebound seniors who are eligible for Meals on Wheels. People of any age with disabilities who are primarily homebound and who have difficulty grocery shopping and preparing meals for themselves may also apply for the service.

Programs are offered out of Fort Collins and Loveland. The Loveland/Berthoud Meals on Wheels program was the first east of the Mississippi when it started in 1968!

A hot meal is delivered on weekdays between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Loveland offers additional frozen meals for evenings and weekends.

In Fort Collins a meal costs \$4.50, but low-income people can apply for a reduced fee on a sliding scale, the minimum charge being \$2.00 per meal. Payment for the month is due by the 15th. The Loveland program uses a sliding scale for all clients.

For more information and a Fort Collins/Laporte enrollment form, call 484-6325. For the Loveland/ Berthoud/Masonville/Carter Lake area, call 667-0311.

An additional resource for homebound people over 60 in Larimer County is the Frozen Meals on Wheels provided by Volunteers of America. Deliveries of five to seven boxes are made once a week between 10 a.m. and 2:30 pm. This service is free, though donations are encouraged.

For more information contact Katie Harper, the Nutrition Program Coordinator at (970) 472-9630 or nutritioncoord@frii.com.

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Mission Statement

Disabled Resource Services Empowers individuals with disabilities to achieve their maximum level of independence through services supporting advocacy, awareness, and access to their community.

Purpose

Disabled Resource Services is a private, non-profit, state-certified, center for independent living that provides services to individuals with all types of disabilities.

WEB SITE <http://www.fortnet.org/drs/>

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