

Civic participation does affect politics

The voices of people with disabilities need to be heard. There are many ways to be heard.

Voting is an important way to make one's voice heard, so don't forget to VOTE in November!

Many people with disabilities in our community not only vote, but also work hard to improve life by advocating with government representatives, like Fort Collins City Council members.

For example, Caryl Schonbrun, her family, and friends have attended City Council meetings, as has Nancy Jackson, Executive Director of DRS, to speak in the Public Comment periods. They want to get an ordinance passed that would mandate using the "green" products available rather than the noxious pesticides which cause such harm to people with MCS. Schonbrun has met with Mayor Doug Hutchinson and City Manager Darin Atteberry to further explain the problems of people like her.

Additionally, the Commission on Disability asked City Council to support an ordinance requiring anyone spraying to notify people in the vicinity in advance, as well as updating the Council's own "call list" for future spraying. The Council has responded that the number of MCS sufferers is so small that it is so far not inclined to act.

Schonbrun

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all the shopping and cleaning. Portable oxygen is standing by at all times because when she is exposed to anything noxious, she feels as if she is suffocating and about to faint. Her heart beats very fast, she breaks out in welts and she

Opinion letters to newspapers are another method of informing people. Caryl, her friends and family have used that tool. Susan Williams, Chair of the Commission of Disability, is a frequent letter- and soapbox-writer to the Fort Collins Coloradoan, usually on the subject of Dial-A-Ride (DAR) policies, hours and charges.

Williams, along with Vivan Armendariz and Toni Lueck lobbied hard against the DAR "cut-backs" to strict ADA standards, proposed by the City wrestling with budget cuts. Some less than perfect concessions were won.

Night services continue through December 2007, but if new funding is not obtained, they will be discontinued in 2008. Eighty-one current riders living outside the ADA-mandated service area were "grandfathered" in, allowed to continue using DAR. However, the minimum fare went up to \$2.50 from 50 cents, so a round trip now costs a minimum of \$5.

All new riders must ask their doctors to fill out a multi-page document supporting their application. Anyone living more than ¾ mile beyond fixed bus routes is automatically ineligible.

The fact that things are not worse is due in large part to people with disabilities campaigning for other people with disabilities.

can't take a deep breath—a frightening experience.

She finds it almost impossible to visit other people's homes, unless they work hard to accommodate her. Many friends who can't cope with the illness, have drifted away, forcing her to deal

Wine Fest XXV raises generous funds for DRS

A quarter century of Wine Fest fund-raisers was celebrated at the Hilton on May 25. Even more effort than usual went into making the occasion special. And special it was.

The number of tickets sold rose 50 percent over 2006. In-kind donations rose by 3 percent, Silent Auction receipts rose by over 35 percent, and gross revenue was up by 63 percent—making this one of the most successful fund-raising events for DRS—resulting in \$34,540 net revenue.

For DRS to continue to meet its mission, operating expenses (rent, salaries, and other costs) must be paid. Wine Fest net proceeds help cover such costs, making it possible for staff to provide services needed by those who come to DRS for help.

Five organizations generously helped underwrite this year's event: Fort Fund, The Griffin Foundation, United Western Bank, Sam's Club Foundation, and Wells Fargo Bank. Many others gave in-kind donations, such as food and advertising.

DRS extends a sincere thank you to all Wine Fest XXV contributors and volunteers for helping to make this such a successful fund-raising event for the agency.

with social isolation and the emotional challenge of living a very different life.

Toxic chemicals affect all of us to some extent. They are good for nobody, even though most of us do not have to lead the difficult life of Caryl Schonbrun.