



# THE SELF ADVOCATE

## People First of Anchorage

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**President:** Lael Venta  
**Vice-President:** Anna Attla

**Treasurer:** Justin Humphrey  
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**Advisor:** Carl Evertsbusch

### People First Mission:

To promote self-advocacy by and among people with disabilities, ensuring that such people are treated as the equals of other citizens; that they are given the same rights, responsibilities, choices, decisions, and chances to make mistakes like everyone else.

### President's Message

We hope that everyone had a very good Christmas and a Happy New Year! We have started discussing having a People First Conference. Remember every bit counts. The more people we have helping, the easier organizing will be. We want to make this happen because this is one way all the People First chapters in the State of Alaska can come together.

### A Word from Our Member

**By: Anna Attla**

Vice-President of People First Anchorage Alaska

I started People First in 1987 and it was a good decision for me. When I was growing up in Galena, Alaska people would tease me. Right now I am working very hard to be a good vice president for People First and I enjoy it. I work on the newsletter to make sure that it goes out every month. I would not mind if anyone wants to come in and help me with it. The more people working together, the better it is. With People First, I got the chance to go to workshops, talk to the public about People First and even do trainings.

### Partners in Policy Making

Kelly Donnelly, Project Coordinator

### Waiver Regulations Pulled

Due in large part to the efforts of consumers and family members, the proposed changes to the Medicaid Home and Community Based Waiver program have been suspended. More than 100 families, foster parents, and providers presented testimony at the Anchorage hearing and it was following the statewide teleconference that Commissioner Livey decided to put the process on hold. Once the new administration has settled in the regulations will again be revisited. Stakeholders will need to remain actively involved to ensure that the regulations are responsive to the needs of Alaskans across the state.

### Just for fun!

Do you see a face or a vase?



*“Always do right—this will gratify some and astonish the rest.”*

— Mark Twain

## In The News

### Abort the blind and disabled

On November 20, 2002 Narragansett Times published an article on Dan Brock, a geneticist. Brock is a strong supporter of pre-birth screening. This means that he wants to give people the choice of not having a child with disability. He says that people should have the choice to abort the person being born with those conditions. His exact words are as follows. "It's considered a misfortune to be born blind but if it's a bad thing for a born person, then why not prevent these conditions in someone who will be born?" His final quote on this is "Preventing a severe disability is not for the sake of the child who will have it. Rather, it is for the sake of less suffering and loss of opportunity in the world." (You can read the article and the responses at [www.NarragansettTimes.com](http://www.NarragansettTimes.com)). People First thinks this is dangerous thinking. We strongly feel that this is the wrong way to help people with disabilities. Tell us what you think by emailing us at [peoplefirst@customcpu.com](mailto:peoplefirst@customcpu.com)

### Disabilities Act doesn't reach internet?

Judge ruled that Southwest Airlines does not have to revamp its website to make it more accessible to the blind.

In Florida, the U.S. District Judge Patricia Seitz said the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies ONLY to physical space, such as

buildings and so forth. ADA DOES NOT apply to the internet.

Access Now, an advocacy group for the blind, filed a lawsuit for Robert Gumson. Gumson found it "extremely difficult" to purchase tickets from Southwest's website. He asked Southwest to redesign their site to better accommodate the blind. Seitz said that ADA does not cover the internet because Congress was very specific in referring to the physical spaces.

## Useful Websites

Accommodating Persons with Mental Retardation in Regular Work Setting:

[www.jan.wvu.edu/soar/mr/mrex.html](http://www.jan.wvu.edu/soar/mr/mrex.html)

Access Ingenuity is a leader in the development of effective access solutions for people with disabilities:

[www.accessingenuity.com](http://www.accessingenuity.com)

A community of equal partners have come together to provide a circle of support for ALL children from birth to adult life with a special focus on those who have disabilities, special needs, or who are at-risk:

[www.bridges4kids.org](http://www.bridges4kids.org)

Inclusive Performing or Visual arts:

[www.chickenshed.org.uk](http://www.chickenshed.org.uk)

[www.vsaartsne.org/whatsvsa.htm](http://www.vsaartsne.org/whatsvsa.htm)

[nadc.ucla.edu/theatre1.html](http://nadc.ucla.edu/theatre1.html)

## Meeting Dates:

January 2 & 16, 2003 5-6pm

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