

February 2003



# THE SELF ADVOCATE

## People First of Anchorage

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

**Treasurer:** Justin Humphrey  
**Secretary:** Lucy Odden

**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

The Key Campaign was very successful this year. There were people from all over Alaska in Juneau advocating for people with disabilities. If you were in Juneau, I would recommend that you send thank you letters to the legislators that you visited. Remember to also include Commissioner Joel Gilbertson and Special Assistant Dennis DeWitt. The contact information is at the following website <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/doso/dosotable.htm>

Since we have been planning a statewide summit, everything is starting to come together now. We do want more people to support us in this event. Anyway that you can help would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in finding out more about the summit please feel free to contact us. We would love to hear from you. We want to see more people.

### Meeting Dates:

March 20, 2003 5-6 at 2210 Arca Drive

### Key Campaign XVI

The Key Campaign was on February 25th and 26th, 2003. The platforms that were presented to the legislators are: "hold harmless" for one year, developmental disabilities wait list reduction, and eliminate the wait list for the infant learning program. There were many friends, family and self-advocates were at Juneau for the Key Campaign.

On the first day, there was an orientation to Key Campaign where they showed the history of Key and role-played what to expect when visiting with the legislators. Later that night, at the Unity dinner the supporters of Key came together and met each other, which ended with a candle light vigil.

On the second day, the SWAT Team was out on the steps of the capitol steps handing out brochures from 7:00am. Then the fun began! The legislative visits started. This is where all the legislators get to listen to the personal stories from the Key Campaigners. At noon, there was a rally held at the capitol steps to demonstrate the need and the Wait List issues.

The Key Campaign is been a good experience for those self-advocates that attended. As Anna Attla says " I learned how what the role of a true self-advocate should be. I think that if more people go to the Key Campaign, it would good for them. More people should attend!"

## Full Lives Conference 2003

If you are interested in being a volunteer for the Full Lives Conference, sign up and give your phone number at the next People First Meeting. You can also contact Marilyn Connor at CHD (907) 272-8270.

We will see YOU at FULL LIVES in April!

## Talking Tax Forms For Visually Impaired Develped

A significant advance in the independence and privacy of visually impaired people has come from what many might think and unlikely source --the Internal Revenue Service.

Most federal forms and many reports posted on the Internet are not very useful for the country's 14 million visually impaired. A Braille version doesn't work because the sighted people receiving the forms cannot understand it. "Screen-reading" software that reads text out loud cannot cope with the forms and other reports using PDF "portable" document format the screen-reader can't read PDF because it views the screen as a picture rather than words. You can find this on the IRS website: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)

## Nick's crusade

ADAP counsel James Tucker, Lauren Carr and Anil Mujumdar, along with co-counsel Larry Menefee filed suit in Federal

Court for the Middle District of Alabama on behalf of Nick Dupree. The suit was filed against Governor Bob Riley, and Mike Lewis, Commissioner of the Alabama Medicaid Agency. Nick Dupree is 20 years old and in his junior year at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama and has a 3.54 g.p.a. He has a rare genetic disorder affecting all of his voluntary muscles. He is unable to move and requires a ventilator to breathe. Currently, Dupree lives at home with his mother, receives in-home nursing care and other services through Medicaid EPSDT. However, Dupree was informed that upon his reaching age 21, his services will cease, and he will probably be sent to a nursing home in Louisiana. Mr. Dupree turned 21 on February 23, 2003.

The lawsuit alleges the termination of Medicaid services threatens Dupree's life. If he does not receive proper medical care, he can die in minutes. The suit alleges the denial of services to Dupree is unlawful and is in violation of federal Medicaid statutes, The Rehabilitation Act, and The ADA.

A motion for an emergency injunction was filed simultaneously requesting the court to enjoin Medicaid from ceasing the services Nick Dupree receives upon his turning 21 years old. If you have any questions about his suit, you can contact James Tucker, Lauren Carr or Anil Mujumdar at ADAP.

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