

The Alliance for Inclusive Education

ALFIE FOUNDER KARIN DINARDI PASSES AWAY

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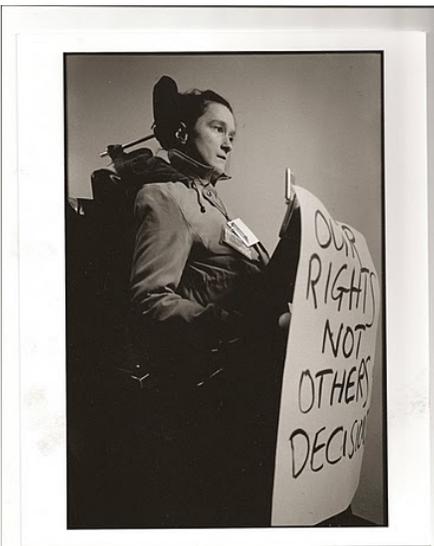
It is with great sadness that we have to bring you the news that our colleague Karin passed away in November. Karin had been on life support for almost two years.

Karin a former student of Widener Memorial college was passionate that disabled young people should have a better education that the one she received and that all children should learn together in inclusive settings. Karin’s dream was that disabled people who had experienced exclusion needed a voice so they could make sure that inclusion was done right. Karin was committed and focused.



Karin in the foreground leading an ALFIE demonstration

She campaigned and cajoled Liberty Resources into supporting Inclusion and the setting up of ALFIE the Alliance For Inclusive Education. On the 50th Anniversary of Brown v Board of Education Karin led over 200 people to the gates of the then Philadelphia school district Headquarters asking the fundamental question when is it time for disabled people and non disabled people to be desegregated? Subsequently ALFIE with the then CEO Paul Vallas met regularly and ALFIE began to have a voice in the development of Inclusive Practice in Philadelphia schools. Along with others Karin began to work in classrooms and make presentations articulating how disabled people felt about segregation and how schools could become inclusive. Karin was always first to defend ALFIE and its position passionately and effectively. Karin will be sorely missed as ALFIE continues its struggle. We love you Karin and you will always be in our hearts. We will carry it on!



DISABILITY EQUALITY IN EDUCATION (DEE) NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

DEE is the business end of ALFIE. Our aim is to establish a 501c organization committed to establishing a company run and controlled by disabled people that can offer real services to Educators in Philly in PA and in the USA. So far ALFIE has relied on other friendly organizations to support them in successfully managing grants and contracts and we believe we are now ready to strike out on our own.

The situation is that we have already filed for 501c status with the state of Pennsylvania. We have articles of incorporation filed and a sitting board? The sticking point at present is we have no money, not a cent and we need about \$3000 to file our federal stuff, to get insurance that will let us work with children in schools and to cover legal expenses. So we are asking all our readers both individuals and organizations to help found the only education focused agency in Pennsylvania ran and controlled by disabled people. Please make checks payable to Disability Equality in Education and send to the address on the back of this newsletter. Every donation will be acknowledged in the next Newsletter due out in February 2010. If we achieve this target DEE will be able to set sail getting contracts from school districts and applying for grants to bring a disability voice into the heart of the push for inclusive education. This is a one off appeal so that we can start our own organization and become self sufficient. Please help us if you can.

NEWSLETTER LOOKING FOR GREAT ARTICLES!!!

We welcome serious articles on inclusion from any of our readers. We would like to make this newsletter both thoughtful and informative. Articles should be no more than 750 words. The deadline for the next Newsletter is Feb 10th. 2010 and any thoughtful papers will be considered. Lets create a really good sounding board for ideas and analysis around inclusion.

ALFIE HAS A GREAT MEETING WITH SCHOOL DISTRICT CEO ARLENE ACKERMAN CONTINUED.

On the 17th Nov ALFIE finally met with Dr. Arlene Ackerman, Chief Executive Officer of the Philadelphia School District. After telling her what ALFIE was about and some of our history Dr. Ackerman agreed to the following actions.

1. Dr Ackerman, like her predecessor Paul Vallas, will meet with ALFIE quarterly to keep in touch with how the School District is using our ideas and monitor progress.
2. Dr Ackerman has asked her staff to work with ALFIE to ensure that the teachers manual is available online to all teachers,
3. ALFIE is to make a short presentation at the next School Reform Commission meeting.
4. Dr Ackerman said she would make it a personal commitment that Philadelphia would be the first school district in the State to inaugurate a district wide Disability history Week and a Disability awareness week. The School District and ALFIE would work closely together to ensure that this happened in the 2010/2011 school year.
5. ALFIE will be meeting with the school district's climate control personnel to make the anti bullying of disabled children explicit in the districts zero tolerance on bullying program.
6. ALFIE will send representatives to the School Districts' facilities strategic group on making schools physically accessible.

Finally ALFIE talked about the need to have an ongoing partnership with the district as opposed to working from small grant to small grant. The above commitments will create a huge amount of work for ALFIE and it's sister organization DEE and it was agreed that we need to work out how a long term partnership can work with proper remuneration for the work we are undertaking. ALFIE will now be working with Linda Williams Brenda Taylor and other officers with the aim of presenting to Dr. Ackerman at the next meeting in February 2010 a way forward. This final commitment offers the possibility of a secure future for ALFIE and a real role for disabled people in the development of inclusive practice in Philadelphia and beyond. On behalf of all those ALFIE members who attended We can say that we were very pleased with how the meeting went and in particular Dr. Ackerman's grasp of how important it is to include us in the solutions to developing inclusion.



From Inclusion tools by
Colleen Tomko
Kids together.

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Arlen Ackerman

ALFIE'S TRANSITIONING PROJECT

ALFIE is working with the School District of Philadelphia to find out what concerns young disabled people have as they transition to adult life.

ALFIE is preparing a research tool based on the transition matrix, *opposite*, which will translate into questionnaires. The vertical column represents the steps that need to be in place for disabled people to achieve independence whilst the horizontal column represents 3 areas that young disabled people need to be confident and practiced in.

For instance a young person may *know* how to use a telephone but not *feel* confident in doing so. They may also never have had the practice of selling their skills on a telephone (doing). We are preparing questionnaires where young disabled people will rate from 1 to 5. 1 being having real concerns, 5 being ok with this. A sample of these questionnaires is shown opposite. We will also ask the young people if there are any other concerns/ issues that we missed. Collating all the responses we will be able to see what concerns young people most and based on this we will write a report suggesting how the School District and other agencies can design programs to address these concerns.

We will also be asking parents to go through the questionnaires separately to see how their responses are both similar and different. The results of this will also be in the report.

All responses and interviews will be in the strictest confidence and the report will not single out any individual by name or otherwise.

This process in itself will be beneficial as it gives parents and young disabled people the opportunity to assess where they are in the transitioning process and signposts for them what they still need to do.

If you would like to take part in this exciting project even if you are not living in Philadelphia please contact ALFIE.

(contact details on the back page).

Transition matrix	Knowing	Feeling	Doing
Advocacy			
Peer support /friends			
Housing			
Aids and adaptations. Technical assistance			
Personal assistance/ support			
Transport			
Accessible environments			
Education			
Employment			
Collective advocacy			

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

	1	2	3	4	5
Transport knowing					
I know how to use public transport to get to where I want to go.					
I know how to get onto para transit.					
I know where to go to get a new wheelchair.					
I know where to go if I want to learn to drive.					
I know where the nearest bus stop is to my house.					
I know what different forms of transport cost.					
Transport feeling					
I feel confident about traveling alone.					
I feel ok about not getting lost					
I feel ok with having someone assist me to get to where I want to go					
Transport Doing					
I need to practice getting into center city on my own.					
I need to practice getting a transit card.					
I need to practice crossing the road					
I need to practice the common routes I travel					

“STICKS AND STONES”

UNDERSTANDING THE BULLYING OF DISABLED YOUNG PEOPLE

Spastic, Spaz, Spazmo, stupid, idiot, retard, bungalow bill, (nothing upstairs), mad person, the handicapped, cripple, brain dead, weirdo are just some of the names that came out during our work in elementary schools when we asked disabled children if they had ever experienced bullying or name calling. 100% of children had been called names some had even experienced physical abuse.

There is an old saying that my own mother used to tell me when I too experienced this sort of name calling by my own peers. It went like this;

“Sticks and stones will break my bones

But names will never hurt me.”

I was supposed to say this as a sort of mantra, like an ostrich sticking his head in the sand and ignoring the reality around me. It wasn't really a good strategy. Meanwhile the bullying continued.

As a victim of bullying from the age of 11 to 16 I think it is important for school districts to fully understand what bullying eventually results in and the different forms of bullying that disabled people experience.

Bullying results in being belittled and dehumanized, it engenders low self esteem and self hatred of the difference the bullies have picked on. It establishes a pecking order of sorts in a competitive and destructive school peer culture. Its central message is that you are less equal and therefore deserve less respect and when the victim behaves as predicted it proves the bullies point.

For the sake of analysis bullying can take three forms Physical. Emotional and Cultural and can be Direct (intentional), or Indirect (unintentional).

Examples of physical bullying could be physical abuse being hit or forced to fight another victim and then using the traumatic experience to threaten and cajole the victim. This for me was a personal experience. An example of indirect physical bullying could involve rough handling by untrained staff, too lazy to find out how to communicate or being asked to take part in gym activities which cause pain and distress, due to an individual's impairment.

Examples of emotional bullying could be through name calling and teasing and being the butt of jokes or mimicking or stereotyping. These would be direct examples. Indirect examples of emotional bullying are probably the most common forms that all disabled children will experience and I would like to explore this in more depth.

When we asked non disabled children why some children were in segregated classrooms within the school the answer we got back was one of three basic responses.

They were naughty, (being punished), they were stupid, (their fault), or they were ill and needed help, (pity). These and other stereotypes of disabled people pervade the society we live in both in and out of school. As a disabled person being felt sorry for all your life really does lower your self esteem, being seen as stupid or as the person who is always the helped and never the helper does the same thing and to me is a form of emotional indirect bullying. If I can not help my behavior and it is labeled as naughty that also opens me up to being a victim of bullying. As stated above the purpose of bullying from the bully's point of view is to belittle, to create inequality, to engender low self esteem and self hatred in the victim. All of these examples of the indirect form of emotional bullying result in exactly this.

Cultural bullying is when we create a bullying culture in our schools. The direct form could be through initiation tests designed to humiliate or through policies that devalue the humanity of disabled children. One example of this is disabled children being undressed with the toilet door open whilst their "care giver" helps them onto the toilet.

Indirect cultural bullying is when the whole school buys into the stereotypes of disabled people or has a pitying attitude creating inequality and subsequently low self esteem.

As a consequence of this ALFIE is pleased that the School District wants to work with us to see how we can make the zero tolerance of the bullying of disabled children explicit in their policy and practice. No child should be dehumanized or belittled. All children should have a sense that they are all equal and no one should grow up learning how to have low self esteem and self hatred for themselves. This I believe is our joint aim and we look forward to working with the district to ensure that bullying of disabled children is eradicated in Philadelphia schools.

Johnny Crescendo 2009.

Karin Dinardi remembered. The journey by Marsha T. Peurifoy

I imagine her waking up Saying to herself “Boy I feel good this afternoon!” It is then she notices she can move her arms and legs, but in a whole different way. She sits up on the bed and proceeds to not only stand but to walk. It is at this moment she shouts “No Wheelchair!” She offers her thanks to the doctors and nurses but they don’t seem to hear her. She goes outside and relishes the cool air. She then goes to see her brothers house and these she see them crying being consoled by his brother. Karin says Jimmy Shaun I’m right here but they don’t seem to hear her either. Now somewhat disgruntled she goes to the home of Lenny’ mother. When the door opens Karin Runs in and yells “surprise!” but she sees him crying, being consoled by his mother. It is at this moment that she realizes what is going on. She stops at the homes of some close relatives and friends and finally to Liberty Resources where she was employed. Everything is business as usual except in offices here and there people are crying, Karin then knowing her work is complete goes on a long beautiful trip to eternity.

RESOURCES

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY?

ALFIE has a collection of Children’s Books which have good, non stereotypical, inclusive storylines about disabled people. Inclusion These are available to purchase or for ALFIE to come to you with an exhibition/ presentation talking about why we like this representation and exploring some of the negative presentations out there in the general media.

BRINGING INCLUSION INTO YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ALFIE’s Teachers Manual is a comprehensive tool for teachers and schools to measure their inclusive practice. It contains real examples of good practice from other Elementary schools, a generic action plan that all schools could implement, and ideas for incorporating disability into the core curriculum. It also explains disabled people’s perspectives on inclusion, segregation, integration and the Social Model of Disability. If schools think they can not do inclusion without our ,(disabled People’s), input.... this is for you.

TRAINING AND PRESENTATIONS

ALFIE is available for a fee to deliver trainings and presentations to your school, school district or group on a whole range of issues around involving a disability perspective into your inclusive practice. These include : The Social Model of Disability, Bullying and disabled young people, language Images and stereotypes of disabled people, a citizenship approach to policy making, creating and implementing a realistic action plan for inclusion in your school and many more. Each training or presentation is personally tailored to your needs and is led by a disabled trainer with over 20 years experience in delivering inclusive practice. **For further information on all the above please go to the back page for contact information.**

ALFIE : All children grow learn and play together!



THINK INCLUSION

CONTACT

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ALFIE MEETINGS GET INVOLVED!

January 2010 meeting

14th Jan 2010 from 11am. to 1pm.

February 2010 meeting

16th Feb 2010 from 11 am. to 1 pm.

All meetings are at Liberty Resources

714 Market Street Philadelphia PA

THANKS

ALFIE would like to thank the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council for their support in the production of this newsletter.

We would also like to thank the Public Interest Law centre of Philadelphia for their support in our work with the School District of Philadelphia.

Finally we would like to thank Liberty Resources for their support over the years and their continued support in allowing us to meet at their offices on Market Street in Philadelphia.

