

YLF NEWS

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President Bush is shown signing the A.D.A. with Justin Dart, advocate.

CIVIL RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS, DISABILITY RIGHTS: SAME STRUGGLE: *Join the Civil Rights Movement for People with Developmental and Other Disabilities*

Is self-advocacy really a civil rights movement? It sure is! Self-advocacy is changing how society looks at disability. No longer hidden away in institutions, individuals with disabilities are now advocating for themselves, demanding freedom, equality, and justice for all people. The United States has come a long way advocating for policies that improve the lives of people with disabilities.

In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (A.D.A.) was passed. This law provides basic rights to people with disabilities: equal access to public places, prohibits discrimination in employment, and equal access to public transportation.

"Without the A.D.A., I would not have been able to join my High School swim or water polo team, because of the able-body vs. adaptive sports segregation that used to be okay. I would not have been able to ride the local bus to the mall or beach because they would not have to be equipped with lifts for wheelchair users. I would not have been able to get into most public places because the door of the business would not have had to be widened for my wheelchair. Most importantly, I would not have been able to write this article because we would not have such willing agencies working with person that have disabilities. There are so many other great things that the A.D.A. has done for persons with disabilities. It is important to remember the value of A.D.A. as we continue our work in the disability movement." - Christina Mills, Deputy Director California Foundation for Independent Living Centers.

In 1990, reauthorization of the Education for All Handicapped Children was passed and renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.). The purpose of I.D.E.A. is that students with a disability must be provided a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) that prepares children for further education, employment, and independent living.

In 2001, the New Freedom Initiative was passed to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of society by increasing access to assistive technologies, expanding educational and employment opportunities, and access to daily community life.

The passage of these acts and the advocates behind them show how the disability civil rights movement has improved life for others. Advocates across the world are still joining together, to assure there is freedom and access or all. Will **YOU** help continue the efforts for disability rights?

We should all stand proud of our disabilities and even prouder of the history that got us all here. - Mills

Learn more about the A.D.A. - Check out <http://www.ada.gov/>