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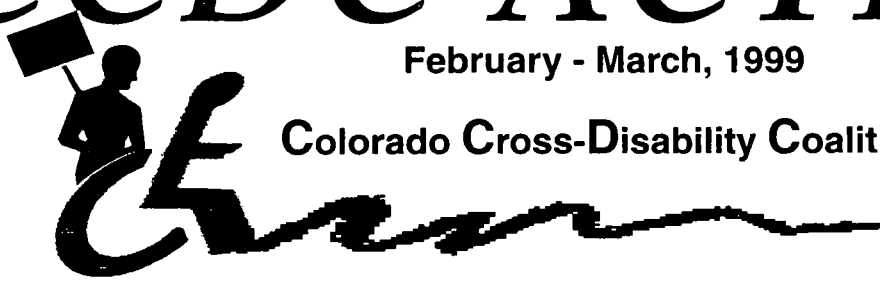
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CCDC ACTION

February - March, 1999

Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition



“Project Win” Grant to Help Working People

by Julie Reiskin

Two years ago advocate Christina Johnson, a woman with multiple disabilities, spoke of her dream of getting a job. She wanted to work, but if she did, she could lose the supports she needed to be productive. Today she is still not working (for pay). Soon that may change for Christina and others with disabilities, thanks to some money that came into Colorado to help people with disabilities change the systems that keep us poor and unemployed.

As people with disabilities we know the problem is not our lack of ability but government systems that do everything in their power to maintain the status quo. It is the hope of advocates that Project WIN will be the seed of change.

change the system.

- The second part is to hire some people with disabilities called "Consumer Navigators." They will help people with disabilities who want to work with the maze of programs that are available to provide needed supports. They will give us information and be our advocates. The mental health system has used this idea with good results.

- The third part will give people with disabilities the opportunity to give and get training. We can get training on the inside scoop of how things work with the state agencies and we can give agencies training about people with disabilities. After all, we are the experts in this area!

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What is Project Win?

It is a four-part grant from the federal government for people in Colorado.

- The first part is to gather a group of people to make a list of all the rules that are a problem and come up with solutions to change those rules. The group will be a majority of people with disabilities and will include representatives from state agencies who have agreed to help us



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ACTION

A publication of the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition Fall, 1998

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The Choice is Yours: "life" or "existence"

by Julie Reiskin

It is the year 2002. You wake up on a crisp fall Colorado morning and your aide is at your door, on time and efficient as always. Since you are the employer and you pay your aides they are happy to arrive at the time you need them and do whatever tasks you request.

You get in your well functioning wheelchair and go through your morning routine and take accessible transportation to work yes work: a real career with good pay and lots of challenge and opportunity for advancement.

At work you have the assistive technology and supports you need to function, paid for by Vocational Rehabilitation so you have not had to hassle with your employer.

You are able to work and deal with your disability because you can get the medical care you need with ease and are not spending time hassling with HMO rules and limitations.

Maybe you have a psychiatric disability and cannot work on a regular basis. Imagine being able to work while you can and then get Social Security benefits when you cannot.



photo by Carolyn Reed

You are able to get the type of medical treatment that works for you, again without hassle.

Maybe you have a cognitive disability and you need supports to work and live independently. You have a choice about where you work and you can live just like everyone else, with the same struggles and joys in regular homes and apartments. You can enjoy your family because they are not your main support people. The system provides supports and facilitates natural supports.

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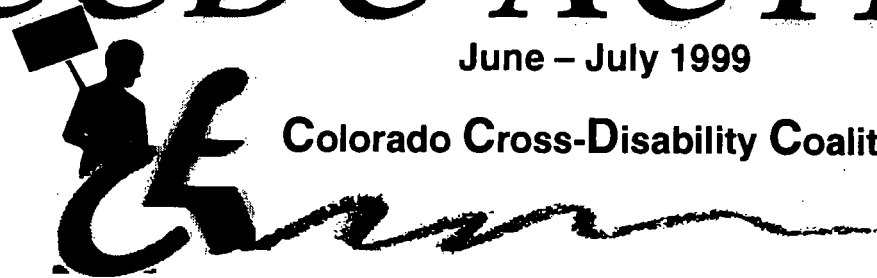
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CCDC ACTION

June – July 1999

Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition



Dollars and Death

by Marta Russell

Living in a neoliberal era, where the interests of business dominate government and public policy, and in a climate that more and more measures one's worth by economic efficacy, demands that we scrutinize the "right" to die beyond a liberal expansion of individual rights. We must look at the timing of these proposals.

In his latest book *Freedom to Die: People, Politics and the Right to Die Movement*, Derek Humphrey, co-founder of the Hemlock Society, the oldest and largest pro-euthanasia/assisted suicide group, says it will be the unspoken argument for assisted suicide-cost containment that will ensure the eventual passage of laws legalizing assisted suicide and euthanasia. Humphrey argues it will be the drive to save health care dollars that will push public policy their direction, not the drive for increased autonomy (as the death with dignity slogans assure the public).

Humphrey is right to make the connection.

Some have been speaking the unspoken for years. The convicted murderer Jack Kevorkian exposed his real agenda in a Written Statement to Court (August 17, 1990), writing, "The voluntary self-elimination of mortally diseased or crippled lives taken collectively can only enhance preservation of public health and welfare"



Courts are listening to this line of reasoning. When the 9th Circuit Court in San Francisco ruled that individuals have a constitutional right to physician assisted suicide, it specifically targeted the handicapped as "beneficiaries," stating that it may be acceptable for "competent terminally ill adults to take the economic welfare of their families and loved ones into consideration" when deciding whether to live or die. The Court also defended the use of assisted suicide to control medical costs.

An editorial on the *Weekly Standard*, the voice of the GOP majority concluded in 1995, "Sick people are expensive. The dead are a burden to no one. Years ago the child had whooping cough and died. Now that child grows up to be a very expensive old

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