



# DP EXPRESS

## *Fall 2016*

### **Keeogo Exoskeleton**

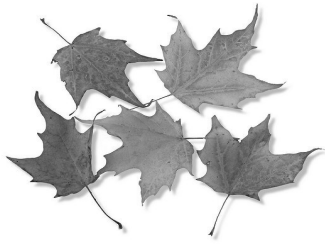
### **Shannon Chisholm:**



On Sunday, July 17, 2011 a vibrant, beautiful and energetic woman hopped on her bike for her daily ride. During her ride, she stopped at a ride light and in an instant she was struck from behind by a woman's vehicle and thrown from her bike. This is the story of how our Miss Wheelchair NC 2015 incurred her T-10 incomplete spinal cord injury.

Shannon Chisholm is a mother of two young boys, a wife and a physical therapist assistant. What is so intriguing is that before Shannon was injured she worked helping young children who were in wheelchairs with physical therapy. Shannon went through many hardships after sustaining her spinal cord injury (SCI). The woman who hit Shannon with her vehicle had insurance that had a maximum of \$50,000 liability, which is all that was awarded to Shannon and her family.

Shannon has the ambition to spread awareness about disabilities and accessibility for people using wheelchairs. Shannon is still a physical therapist assistant and is also a certified personal trainer in North Carolina. Recently, Shannon was able to try out the Keeogo exoskeleton, a dermoskeleton device that was invented to help the human body control what has been lost or impaired due to disease, injury or aging. The Keeogo was invented, tested and is distributed by a company in Québec named B-TEMIA Inc. Keeogo is a walking assistive device with a motorized system, worn on the lower body that provides individuals with the leg power they need to walk longer distances, walk better and keep the endurance to go throughout their day. On March 26<sup>th</sup> 2016, Shannon was able to try this amazing technology. After five years of not standing or walking, Shannon was able to stand, walk and dance with her husband as well as her father. There is an amazing, tear inducing video of this experience on YouTube under 'Shannon Chisholm.' I had a chance to speak with Shannon about her experience with the Keeogo exoskeleton. "I was definitely overcome with emotion. To have the feeling of being able to look my family in the eyes and being able to stand and dance on my own two feet was overwhelming. This exoskeleton suit and others like it gives people with paralysis hope and will change people's lives one day."



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## THE OLMSTEAD DECISION

This past June was the seventeenth anniversary of the Supreme Court ruling about *Olmstead v. L.C.* that, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the unjustified institutional isolation of people with disabilities is a form of discrimination, which is unlawful. This decision paved the way for many people with disabilities to live in their community rather than in institutions.

The *Olmstead* story started when the original plaintiffs, Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, were in a state psychiatric hospital in Georgia. They filed suit in 1995 seeking disability services in the community. Since the decision in 1999, Lois has gone from living in a psychiatric institution to living in her own home and having a successful career as an artist.

Since 2009, action has been taken in 50 *Olmstead* integration matters in 25 states. Because of the Department of Justice's *Olmstead* enforcement work, today more than 53,000 people with disabilities will have meaningful opportunities to receive services in integrated, community-based settings.

## LIVING WELL WITH A CHRONIC ILLNESS

The Living Healthy Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) is a 6-week long workshop that focuses on helping people with chronic disease gain self-confidence in their ability to control their symptoms and learn how their health problems affect their lives. Examples of chronic health problems include a range of physical and mental illness that include heart disease, lung disease, stroke, arthritis, fibromyalgia, depression, diabetes and more.

This 6-week long workshop will be offered again at DisAbility Partners. We are seeking out people who would be committed in participating before scheduling the workshops. We are anticipating the workshops to be scheduled in October, but again we would like to know how many people can participate. More information can be found at: <http://patienteducation.stanford.edu/programs/cdsmp.html>. Contact DisAbility Partners at 828-298-1977 if you are interested in participating. Also, inform us what days during the week would work best for you in order to get a consensus of when to schedule the workshops.



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## **Amtrak: An Accessible Way to Travel**

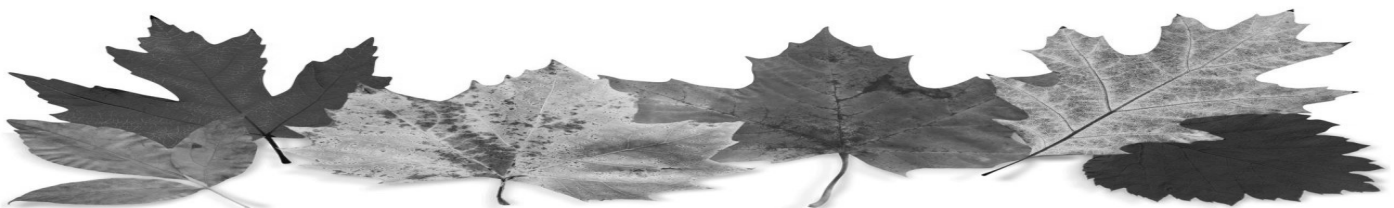
For Kiel Baumbach, Independent Living Specialist at DisAbility Partners, traveling on the Amtrak train from Charlotte to Washington DC was a pleasurable and a very accommodating experience. Each year, the National Council for Independent Living (NCIL) holds a conference in Washington D.C. and Kiel was one of the designated staff to attend this year.

Accessible travel is a must for Kiel since he is a C6/C7 quadriplegic. He made the decision to travel on Amtrak having the knowledge the train was equipped with accessible features for those using a wheelchair. Kiel states, "Upon arriving at the Charlotte Amtrak station, staff was available to assist me and my caregiver with our luggage using the red cab. A red cab is a large golf cart that enables staff to assist individuals with disabilities to get to their seat. There is an area on the train where wheelchairs can be locked down and my caregiver was able to sit in front of me. The accessible seating was close to the accessible restrooms."

Kiel states that the train is air conditioned, along with having WI-FI and power outlets, enabling riders to stay connected and keep their devices powered up. A food car with drinks and snacks is available on the train and according to Kiel, "The staff went above and beyond by offering to get us something from the food car and making sure we had everything needed throughout the eight hour trip."

The Amtrak train will make short stops at certain points in order for riders to go outside for a specific amount of time to "stretch their legs." Kiel stated when Amtrak finally reached their destination, the red cab was again available to assist with their luggage. Kiel experienced the same accommodating service on his returning trip to Charlotte.

According to Kiel, "traveling on one of the Amtrak trains was a very positive experience which I would definitely recommend to people with disabilities."



**Pathways for the Future  
dba  
Western Alliance  
108 New Leicester Hwy  
Asheville NC 28806**



## **DISABILITY PARTNERS EXPRESS**



### **DisAbility Partners Events**

**Friday, September 9 - Do You Like to Color? 2-4 pm.** Come join in the fun and relax the time away by coloring. Adult coloring books and coloring tools will be provided.

**Friday, September 9 - Last Days of Summer Potluck. 4 pm.** Serving hotdogs, including a vegetarian option. Suggested items to bring: buns, slaw, chili, cheese, potato chips, potato salad, baked beans, drinks, dessert.

**Friday, October 14 - Decorate a Pumpkin. 2-4 pm.** Bring your creativity and we will provide the rest. Let us know you want to participate and we will save you a pumpkin to decorate.

**Friday, October 14 – Taco Night. 4 pm.** Taco meat will be provided including a vegetarian option. Suggested items to bring: Soft and hard taco shells, shredded lettuce, shredded cheese, tomatoes, sour cream, refried beans, black beans, tortilla chips, drinks, dessert.

**Friday, November 18 - Rejuvenate your Esteem. 2-4 pm.** Learn ways to help boost up your esteem. We all need a boost now and then.

**Friday, November 14 - Chili Night. 4 pm.** Chili will be provided including a vegetarian option. Suggested items to bring: Cornbread, crackers, salad, shredded cheese, drinks, dessert.