



Wednesday September 17, 2008

ADAPT, a grassroots community, organizes disability rights activists on the local, state, and national level to engage in non-violent direct action, including civil disobedience, to free our people.

## Tuesday Updates

By Jerry Costley

As of this writing, DUH City Times is struggling under the



impediment of having most of our reporters under arrest!

The day started out mellow enough—breakfast on your own or what you could scrape together from Alice’s Restaurant at DUH City. Then a short break to sing protest songs, practice chants, and get ready for the big day, which consisted of three reasonable demands regarding

housing to two Senators and one Representative. We split into three groups to simultaneously present our demands: they commit to support the demands presented in our housing platform, or at least meet with us to discuss doing so. Barney Frank is the Democratic chair over the House Financial Services Committee, which has jurisdiction over many of the issues outlined in ADAPT’s housing platform. He is also known for sponsoring legislation on behalf of VOR (Voice of the Retarded—yes, there is such a group), that would make it more difficult for Protection and Advocacy groups to file class action suits against institutions that abuse or mistreat persons with developmental disabilities. Apparently, Mr. Frank isn’t too big on the civil rights of persons with disabilities. He certainly isn’t interested in listening to us—in short order our members were told that he would not be meeting with us. After friends from around the country began calling in and jamming his phone lines, the arrests began. Fifteen of our members were summarily arrested. We doubt that Mr. Frank even knew why we were there.

Our second group didn’t fare much better with Senator Dodd, though the good

Senator had considerably more patience than his House counterpart. We endured a standoff of over five hours with some very hoarse ADAPTER voices, numerous warnings (if you don’t leave, we’re really going to arrest you this time), and again constant calls to Jen—Senator Dodd’s staffer. She did go through the housing platform with our



Martina Robinson gets hauled away

members point by point, but refused to write a letter committing to a meeting. Jen apparently got upset when our group separated her from her purse, which was in a closet that couldn’t open because the Senator’s offices were jam packed.

We know that individuals are often inconvenienced by our actions. However, when we compare these inconveniences, or even our own, to those faced by our brothers and sisters in nursing homes we somehow lose our empathy.

After several hours of chants with variations of demands to Jen, the police began arresting our members. The arrests are still in progress *Continued on page 2*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Tuesday Updates</i>	1
<i>The Unsung Heroes of the Orange Team</i>	3
<i>Cheryl T’s Story</i>	4
<i>Nathan D’s Story</i>	4

- Over 60 Arrested
- 500 activists with disabilities are in DC to Free Our People!

## TUESDAY UPDATES *Continued From Page 1*

as of this writing and we aren't sure how many will ultimately be arrested. Apparently, the tipping point was that Jen had a friend waiting to pick her up after work and she couldn't get her purse.

I was with the group that went to Senator Richard C. Shelby's offices. The police presence was extremely thick as we wound our way to the Hart Building. It thickened further as we entered the building. Our every move was followed, and to the extent possible, anticipated.

After various vain attempts to shake our escorts we attempted to storm Senator Shelby's office. Two of us got inside—tripped up by one door that was locked. The two inside politely said that our group would like to meet with the good Senator. The police basically advised them against letting everyone in, so his chief of staff went out to meet with our group.

He assured us that the Senator supported housing issues and that he would be happy to set up a meeting "with the right people" "sometime", if we would provide him with a number to call when it was all done and after we had gone home. He noted that the Senator's scheduling persons was unavailable.

We replied that we have lost our faith in vague promises, but that we would be happy to wait while he set up our meeting.

Given his apparently difficulty in understanding or hearing us, we began chanting for accessible, affordable, integrated housing.

Within moments we were given a first, second, and third warning to cease, desist and leave, which most of our members refused to do, resulting in an additional 25 arrests.

Two-thirds of the way through the arrests the good Senator did show up to talk to the remaining arrestees. He assured us of his support for housing, but first wanted a head count of how many in our group worked daily. (I was tempted to ask him the same question). He noted that this information was important for him because he only believed in "helping those who are helping themselves." I wonder what he thinks coming



**McCain's Forgotten Home for the Disabled**

to Washington, DC, sleeping in makeshift tents and being arrested is.

While the Senator's visit was cordial, the arrests continued and given the tone of his remarks, it appears that further education of our circumstances and needs is in order.

Please continue to help us in this education process by writing to Senator Dodd or calling his offices at (202) 224-2823 or faxing him at (202) 224-1083. Call Senator Shelby at (202) 224-5744, faxing him at (202) 224-3416 or emailing him at [senator@shelby.senate.gov](mailto:senator@shelby.senate.gov). Call Representative Frank at (202) 225-5931 or fax him at (202) 225-0182.

Home  
On your own  
Under a roof  
Shell  
Intimate  
Necessary  
Gratifying

*Carlos Rocha,  
Texas*

**DUH City—still on the Web at  
[www.duhcity.org](http://www.duhcity.org)!**

# The Unsung (until now) Heroes of the Orange Team

By: Bruce Darling

When our heroes who were arrested today in the battle for affordable, accessible housing return, they will be rightly greeted by cheers, slaps on the back and expressions of admiration for their courage and willingness to place everything on the line to help free their brothers and sisters who are languishing in nursing homes.

Sometimes, though, heroes are those who faithfully carry out critical but unpleasant tasks as they are assigned, without complaining. Such is the Orange Team, who has manned DUH city each night. Who in their right mind would stay up all night simply to insure DUH city will still be standing in the morning. It is a fair question and here is our answer.

Debbi is one of the lucky ones. She is a quadriplegic and resides in her own home. She has two attendants come to her home to provide assistance, one in the morning and one in the evening. She is here with the ADAPT group to bring awareness to the issue of housing crisis in the disability community because, as she mentions, every person should have the right and opportunity to live independently like she does. Her friend, Bobbi Wallach, is also quadriplegic and she lives in an assisted community in New York. The assisted living community strives to create a homelike environment and has units for families as well as individuals. People live freely and are not restricted to a schedule or lockdowns, as nursing home residents are. "It's about choice," Bobbi says. "People should be able to live where they want."



ange Team and she brings decades of experience to the movement. "To say I am excited is a vast understatement," notes Anita. She is amazed to see the plan working and the police cooperating with ADAPT's efforts. There is a housing crisis and this action is intended to bring the issue to HUD's attention. Our soci-

ety needs to stop perpetuating the medical bias and placing people with disabilities into institutions. Anita is also lucky because, with the help of the Center for Disability Rights (CDR) in New York, Anita was able to find an accessible apartment in a regular apartment building. She does not require public assistance so she fortunately does not have to battle affordable housing issues in her personal life. However, she does do it for a living employed with CDR! The apartment building has actually been extremely accommodating because they learned that Anita is like every other capable rent payer and she even brings good publicity to the management team. Anita knows that although the demonstration in front of HUD will be a success, the true test will not be until the new administration takes office.

Karl Woolsey knows first hand the issue of affordable and accessible housing. In 1996, Karl fell ill and the doctors forced him into a nursing home—he refused to stay. He did not want to waste his life behind the doors of a nursing home. He joined ADAPT in 2002 and through the ADAPT network, he was able to get into his own apartment in Kansas. The issue is that Karl's entire family, including his children, lives in Arizona. Yet Arizona does not have the type of community based services and affordable housing that Karl requires. That is why he is here in D.C. to fight for change. Until the system is changed and federal laws recognize the need for affordable integrated housing, Karl will have to continue live away from his family in Kansas—because he will *not* go into a nursing home!

Similarly, Michael Hale escaped from a nursing home in Alabama only to find his state was insufficient in providing the services he required. He found his way to New York and after living on the streets for some time, a homeless shelter was able to put him contact with a welfare social worker who found him housing.

German Parodi works at a Center for Independent Living in Philadelphia, PA. Karin Dinardi and Casey James introduced him to ADAPT and he joined in 2007. German recognizes that the housing issue that ADAPT fights for is a pillar to create *Continued on page 4*



Cindy Stephens of Utah has been with ADAPT since 2005. She is a group leader and her role is to keep people organized, pumped up, and calm. She is especially excited by this year's action because the message is clear; it is right in front of their faces. Cindy is the Chair to enforce the Fair Housing Act in Utah. She has produced

real results. There was one prominent builder in Utah that continually violated the Fair Housing Act. Cindy and supporters took the builder to court and he ended up proposing a settlement of \$20,000 in subsidies annually for five years. The money went directly to support people with disabilities who could not afford housing. She helped place five people in units with the funds and two of those five have already successfully rolled out of the program and into a stable Section 8 housing unit.

Anita Cameron is the primary leader for the Or-

## Unsung Heroes of the Orange Team *Continued from Page 3*



a more unified nation. He understands the concern that although we need to fight for the passage of the Community Choice Act, which allows more opportunities for people with disabilities to receive services in their communities, we need to be cognizant of the fact that there is a housing crisis. German notes, "We can

fight to have people transition out of nursing facilities, but if they do not have a home to go to, we will just contribute to the homeless crisis in our country. Not to mention that you can't receive services without an address." He is particularly energized for this action and is ready to put in the long overnight hours. According to German, "Sometimes, it is crucial to demonstrate and show the world how oppressed people with disabilities are."

Although David Doktor is in wheelchair, he does retain enough mobility to remain in his own home, which he had owned prior to becoming disabled. His neighbor was not so lucky. He broke his hip and because he could only find enough funds to buy a wheelchair, but not to modify his home, he was forced to live in a nursing home for three years—leaving his wife to live alone in

their home. She visited him every day for three years (continually fighting to get him out of the nursing facility and back to their home) until he passed away. He died without his wife by his side and in an institution far from the home he loved.

"It is unfortunate that we have to bring awareness to this issue in 2008. This should have been resolved decades ago. It just reinforces that people with disabilities continue to live as second class citizens," comments Reggie DeJesus of New York. He works for the Rochester Center for Independent Living and is continually challenged to help people find accessible, affordable and integrated housing. Even those people who he serves that are fortunate to have their own housing often face extreme financial burdens when modifying their homes. Ramps alone can cost several thousand dollars—a cost simply too high for most people with disabilities. Some people wait on waiting lists for years for an accessible unit only to be denied due to their credit check, losing the accessible apartment to a person with no disabilities but better credit. "Every person should have the opportunity for safe, affordable housing."

### Cheryl T.'s Story By: Donya Smith

Cheryl T. is 34 years old and has two school age children, she's currently imprisoned in a nursing home. Cheryl's only income is Social Security. Finding affordable housing is a challenge and Section 8 vouchers are not available. She can't afford to pay a private landlord on her own. She continues to search for housing options, to no avail. Public housing is the only option for Cheryl T., and she's been on wait lists for almost seven months. In the interim, Cheryl has spent those seven months as a captive in a nursing facility, unable to live with her children. She wants to live independently in the community, she wants to live with her family – she wants to be free. Without affordable, accessible, integrated housing, Cheryl and her fellow brothers and sisters will continue to languish and suffer because of the institutional bias.

### Nathan D's Story By: Andy Cooper

Nathan D. is 20 years old, uses a power chair and he's currently imprisoned in a nursing home because he cannot find an affordable accessible apartment anywhere near where he wants to live.

When he was first contacted he was so depressed he refused to see his psychiatrist at the facility. He even refused our first attempts to transition him to freedom. But Tom M., who deals with paraplegia persisted and was finally able to talk to Nathan as a peer.

When Nathan learned he could live and prosper as Tom did outside of the facility he wanted to get out quickly. We arranged for all obstacles—attendant care, food, household goods and furniture—to be removed. However, there is one more obstacle. HOUSING!!!

Nathan's only income is social security. He can't afford to pay a private landlord on his own. He continues to search for housing options, to no avail. Public housing is the only option for Nathan D., but he's been on wait lists for almost six months. He wants to live independently in the community, he wants to live near his family and friends - he wants to be free.

