



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.

On Site at DUH City: Monday Recap

By Amber Smock

Three AM

Last night at the big meeting, ADAPTERs were shocked to find out that they had to be in line at FOUR AM

today! We buckled down however, knowing that there had to be a pretty damn good reason for getting up that early. So we finished our day's business, went to bed, and started getting up as early as one and two am...

My roommate tapped me awake at 3 am and we leaped to action. I took a peek outside and ADAPTERs were already swarming the patio below. We were downstairs by 3:45 am, and as usual with ADAPT, it was "hurry up and wait" as the line formed up. Finally, around 4:30 or so, we began silently heading out.

Luckily, our target destination was only two blocks away! That's right, HUD. As folks streamed in to ring the plaza and our logistics team swarmed in with vans and equipment, Operation DUH took effect. We have set up several dome tents to house our equipment and teams such as

media and food. We are calling this all "DUH City" and we even have a website, www.duhcity.org!

It took us maybe 20 minutes to get our basic stuff set up, *Continued on page 2*



ADAPT set up our housing in the dead of morning

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

STAY IN TOUCH!

This week, ADAPT is getting the word out about housing in several new ways. In addition to our press releases and contacts, we are keeping up with people via the digital world. We have a website devoted to this action at www.duhcity.org, and no less than 37 bloggers at press time are involved with the National ADAPT blogswarm. Folks who love text messages can stay abreast of our doings via NationalADAPT on Twitter, a service that allows users to send brief messages and pictures to one another in real time.

A posse of ADAPTERs are also delivering the DUH City Times to every Congressional office on each of our ac-

tion days. That's right, we are dropping off the news at all 535 politicians' offices on the Hill! We're all fired up to bring you the news so we can work together to FREE OUR PEOPLE! Moreover in putting our money where our mouth is about accessibility we also have large print and audio versions of the newspaper. Call us at (801) 347-0370 or email us at jcostley@sprynet.com to request one of these alternative versions.

In addition, keep an eye on www.duhcity.org for postings of DUHtv, which will have frontline reporting from real live ADAPTERs and will also be captioned. Finally, we have Spanish language outreach efforts, because el pueblo unido nunca sera vencido! For more information, check out www.duhcity.org.

By Amber Smock



ON SITE AT DUH CITY

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“It is a crying shame that a presidential candidate’s campaign would rather arrest poor people than work to find solutions to the lack of affordable, accessible, integrated housing.”

and we were complete within an hour. We have five big blue dome tents set up, which is amazing.

Folks chanted their guts out till 5:30 am, when we had a roster of speakers discuss why affordable, accessible, integrated housing is important. Mike Oxford said, “If Congress set up housing as fast as ADAPT, our problem would be solved!” We heard from many who have been forced into nursing homes or being homeless because of the lack of affordable, accessible, integrated housing.

Our goal in being at HUD is to get politicians and federal agencies to support our housing platform. The police said they wouldn’t arrest anyone if we let visitors and employees have free access. Sometimes we are accommodating and we immediately drew a sidewalk onto our tent city—hence no arrests at Duh City.

10:30 AM

We just finished a big rally where folks talked once again about how important housing is. We also passed out the first copy of this newspaper and a team of folks are now in the process of delivering copies to every office on the Hill. Bloggers are now actively following our news and Twitter is alive with text alerts about the action. Three color groups have departed for missions unknown. The other color groups are holding down the fort at DUH City. Some are taking brief naps. The atmosphere is very relaxed as we save our energy for whatever we have to do next.

2:30 PM

The green color group came back and reported that, under heavy police watch, they visited the Democratic National Committee headquarters. They spoke with staff and a representative of Obama’s campaign, who accepted copies of the platform and promised to pass them along. They also said they supported the concept of affordable, accessible and integrated

housing and would try to drop by to visit DUH City.

It also turned out that the red and yellow color groups went to McCain’s headquarters in Crystal City, Virginia. At the time of this writing, it is reported that several ADAPTERs are inside, and a few folks have been sending cell phone pictures of conflict inside the volunteer area.

Meanwhile, back at DUH, the atmosphere picked up once we heard the



Nervous Police Follow marching ADAPTERs

exciting stories brought back by the action teams. Johnny Crescendo has entertained the crowd a few times, we have done some street theater and we have done many, many rounds of chanting. We expect to be here for quite a while longer and are excited to hear back from our red and yellow McCain teams!

3:20 PM

We hear from our people that ADAPTERs are now being arrested at McCain’s office and that the police are being really, really rough. We know our people are strong and we await word of the final arrest count. It is a crying shame that a presidential candidate’s campaign would rather arrest poor people than work to find solutions to the lack of affordable, accessible, integrated housing.



Three Strikes: No Housing for You By: Amber Smock with Lopeti Penima’ani

“Without affordable, accessible, integrated housing, I would be homeless,” said Lopeti Penima’ani of Salt Lake City ADAPT. “I actually was homeless until I could find an affordable place.”

“In Utah, to get an apartment we have to have first and last month’s rent, plus a credit check. I didn’t have the first and last month’s rent, and my credit was all over the place. With all three strikes, what choice do you have?” *Continued on page 3*

Affordable housing can be a life or death decision for too many of our people with disabilities. Having to face this decision is a violation of our human rights.

We need significant action by lawmakers and HUD to make affordable housing for all a reality, but this change needs to happen in partnership



Lopeti Penima'ani

with groups like ADAPT.

Lopeti also pointed out that the work of disability rights activists has paved the way for real change. "Because of the Disabled Rights Action Committee (DRAC), about seven years ago an apartment complex became accessible. With subsidies it also became affordable and now more people with disabilities live there." 

Housing for All: An Advocate's Vision By Amber Smock with Beto Barrera

Beto Barrera, a Chicago ADAPTER and the Housing Team Leader for Access Living, has been at the forefront of the housing struggle for people with disabilities for many years. He and his team work for housing policy change at the local, state and national levels. He is committed to the vision of affordable, accessible, integrated housing. We sat down for a brief talk about the separate parts of that vision.



ADAPT rally at DUH City (HUD)

Affordability

It's no secret that our people, for the most part, are broke. "Seventy percent of our people are unemployed," said Beto. "Most people on SSI get \$640 a month. There's no housing they can afford, so they get stuck in institutions, nursing homes and group homes."

"That's why HUD and the Centers for Medicaid Services (CMS) need to work together to create availability of affordable housing. The cheapest studio is \$500 a month." In addition, the amount of rent you pay per month does not reflect the real cost of what it takes to live in your own place.

When you move into a new place, you have to have a security deposit, plus buy any furniture or equipment for your new home.

Accessibility

The lack of accessible housing is rooted in historic cultural attitudes towards peoples' place in the world. "Housing designed with steps is based on a European and Middle Eastern cultural heritage," notes Beto. There is a classist element to a world built on stairs. "Poor people used to live in shacks, so rich people wanted to be on stairs to raise themselves above the poor people."

These days, architects and builders justify the use of stairs by citing the possibility of floods. However, as we saw with Hurricane Katrina, floods hit all homes, stairs or no stairs. The problem is compounded by architects being afraid to offer accessible building designs to developers, because developers are reluctant to accept designs they think will not sell. "It's very hard for them to get out of the box," said Beto. "It's a matter of changing attitudes."

The progressive architects and developers are able to use the disability community as a marketing tool. They realize that a lot of people with disabilities have money to spend and design for our market. However, access can still be thwarted by the actions of landlords.

Beto cited the example of a Chicagoan with a physical disability who uses a manual wheelchair. This man visited an apartment building with about 30 to 40 units, but was told by the landlord that there were no units he could rent but that he could refer him to accessible housing. He wrote out the name and contact info, and it turned out to be a *Continued on page 4*

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Housing for All: An Advocate's Vision *Continued from Page 3*

group home. The Chicagoan filed a complaint and, working with advocates, eventually won a \$15,000 settlement against the landlord.

Integration

Why is it so hard to create real communities where all kinds of people live together without segregation? "People see people with disabilities as a commodity, a money maker," said Beto.

Beto made an excellent point when he said, "People with disabilities don't live in housing, they live in programs. Why? Because it's profitable. We are living in government sponsored segregation because it's profitable." Clearly, the government and our people need to work together to create a

change in perception.



Beto Barrera

There are serious problems, however, because our government does not protect the interests of all people. "Our government works for rich people," said Beto. "This is why we have segregated housing. We know that it's cheaper for a person with a disability to live in the community." Instead, the rich get richer off institutions and nursing homes. "Rich people want to con-

tinue making money, so our government is protecting those people," he said.

In a true democracy, the voice of each person would matter, but what we are dealing with is a system where a few make choices for the many, where the rich collect money and the poor get poorer. This is why ADAPT is using our people power this week to get the message to lawmakers that we must work TOGETHER to achieve affordable, accessible, integrated housing.



A BAD MYSTERY BY: JERRY COSTLEY

Everybody loves a mystery, right? Not necessarily, not when it involves flouting congress' intent and leaving more persons with a disability needlessly without housing. This particular mystery began when Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) and HUD assisted housing providers began implementing "elderly only" restrictions that eliminated housing options for many individuals with disabilities—in fact, HUD's own records indicate that over 500,000 living units have these restrictions and more are being added every day.

Concerned about this tremendous loss of housing, Congress created 50,000 "disability only" vouchers from 1997-2000. This was a tremendous relief to our housing shortage. However, the relief was short lived. Every time an individual with a disability would move out of their newly acquired housing, the PHA would "roll over" the voucher to someone without a disability and our community would suffer a further erosion of our housing.

Again, Congress intervened, and from 2001-2004, Congress directed HUD to insure these housing vouchers remained with persons with disabilities when they rolled over. Instead, HUD's instructions to the PHA's are that these vouchers are to go to whoever is next on their waiting list.

In 2006 ADAPT began a series of protests against HUD that resulted in then Secretary Alfonso Jackson researching to find out how many of our vouchers had been lost to their flouting of Congressional intent and our critical needs. Secretary Jackson also agreed to finally issue the long sought letter to the PHAs instructing them to cease giving away our vouchers. After much pressure, we got the letter. Unfortunately, Secretary Jackson was not prompt at keeping his word and was sacked before we could hold him to locating and restoring our lost vouchers.

How many vouchers have been lost? No one knows. Can they be reclaimed? No one seems to know. How could HUD flout Congressional intent for so many years? Therein lies the mystery. Certainly Congress is not going to replace them any time soon with no guarantee that they will remain in circulation for people with disabilities.

Part of ADAPT's demand in our housing platform is that HUD make good on its promises to locate and restore these lost vouchers. Part of our housing crisis is the result of economics. Part is inherent with the difficulty of finding accessible housing. We simply don't need to add an additional part that is the result of HUD's willful disregard of Congress' intent and of our critical needs.

Please join with us in putting whatever pressure you can on HUD to make good on their obligations to people with disabilities!

