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SSD social worker Ernest Garrett (left), who works with students in SSD's deaf and hard of hearing program, met Yoshiko Dart July 26 on the White House lawn during the 20th anniversary commemoration of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Dart is holding the cowboy hat of her late husband Justin Dart, an international disability rights advocate who crafted and spearheaded the passage of the ADA. Garrett, who serves as the president of the National Black Deaf Advocates, was personally invited by Kareem Dale, associate director of the White House Office of Public Engagement and special assistant to the president for disability policy, to witness President Barack Obama's signing of new ADA regulations.



SPECIAL EDITION



Issue 4, 2010

The Future of the ADA
Technology, accessibility to shape future of Americans with Disabilities Act

While new technology can offer new opportunities for people with disabilities, it can present new obstacles as well.

Take the cell phone for example. While voice-activated dialing may offer new freedom to someone with fine-motor difficulties, the prevalence of flip phones and the ever-shrinking keypads can be increasingly difficult to operate.

That was one of many takeaways at the recent National Summit on Disability Policy in Washington D.C. Nancy Martin, administrator for the Special School District Parent Education and Diversity Awareness Program, attended the event which commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and was hosted by the National Council on Disability.

“When new technology is made, the needs of people with disabilities aren’t always on the table from the beginning,” she said. “People with disabilities must be at the table during the design process to make sure new technology is designed with the abilities of everyone in mind. Universal design is important and helps everyone.”

July 26 marked the 20th anniversary of the signing of the ADA, which protects people with disabilities from being discriminated against in the areas of employment, access to public facilities, transportation and communication.

Martin witnessed President George H. W. Bush’s signing of the ADA on the White House lawn in 1990 and returned to Washington D.C. last month to commemorate the anniversary of

the event and take part in the summit. Martin was one of 445 participants from throughout the United States and the only delegate from the state of Missouri.

“It was such a diverse group of people, which was very exciting,” Martin said. “We were diverse in the types of disabilities as well as the groups and not-for-profit agencies that we represented. It was a true cross-section.”

Martin, who was born with cerebral palsy, is one of nearly 50 million people living in the United States today with some type of long-lasting condition or disability. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, people with disabilities make up 19.3 percent of the population nationwide — or roughly one out of five people.

“Chances are that everyone either knows someone with a disability or is personally affected by some type of disability,” Martin said. “This is a universal issue.”

Martin said the summit was a wonderful opportunity to network with other disability rights advocates from across the country. While the event gave an opportunity to look at the disability rights advances made over the past 20 years, it also provided a chance to set a course for the future.

“There were many, many young people with disabilities in their 20s and 30s, who have a different perspective and a different voice,” she said. “All of us ‘veterans’ had and still have concerns about accessible parking, public bathrooms and things like that. The new people brought a completely new perspective.



SSD employee Nancy Martin served as a delegate to the National Summit on Disability Policy hosted by the National Council on Disability. The summit, which focused on the future of the Americans with Disabilities Act, commemorated the 20th anniversary of the signing of the historic legislation.

“To know that some of them weren’t even born when the ADA became law — that they’ve never lived in a world without the rights guaranteed to them by the ADA — was striking.”

Martin said an exciting part of the summit was to see people with such varying backgrounds come together for a common cause.

“We are such a huge group with such a variety of needs,” she said. “The fact that we can all come together and find a common voice is amazing. There’s more power in our numbers. Regardless of what our disability may be, we all want accessibility.”

Martin said while she has seen many changes regarding accessibility over the past 20 years, she’s not sure what the future holds.

“I’ve seen so many new things. The ADA is evolving,” she said. “In the next 20 years we’re going to see new things come up that we haven’t even thought about.”

We've Moved!

It's time to break out your address book and an eraser:

The SSD website has moved. But this is more than just an address change. It's a whole new way to look at SSD.

This summer, the website for Special School District moved from its old address to its new home at www.ssdmo.org. Now that we're finally done unpacking the boxes, we hope you'll take some time to visit us at our new digs. But be forewarned: This isn't the SSD website you've come to know.

Rather than simply move old content from one location to another, SSD developed a whole new website from the ground up. The new site offers a fresh new look and scores of new features and resources designed specifically with our students and their families in mind.

www.ssdmo.org

- **Searchable Staff Directory**
- **Careers**
- **Staff Login**

Looking for an SSD employee? Looking for a job? Already an employee of the school district? This section is for you.

- **Popular at SSD**

Pressed for time? This section offers readers a quick peek at what's hot on the SSD website.

- **Special Education at SSD**

Information and resources on three key steps in the special education journey: "Getting Started at SSD," "Making the Most of the IEP Process" and "Planning for Adult Life."

- **Feature Stories**

A revolving collection of feature stories about the people who make SSD what it is: Its students, their families and the SSD staff who support them.

- **Cool Tools**

Our online warehouse for parent resources, featuring podcasts, helpful checklists, resources on specific disabilities, information on parent workshops and even an "Ask the Experts" corner.

- **About SSD**
- **Schools & Services**
- **Leadership**

Key facts about SSD, its schools and its leaders. This is where you'll find everything from a list of board members to school lunch menus.

No mere summary can fully explain all of the great new additions to the SSD website. You'll just have to stop by www.ssdmo.org to see for yourself.

Sometimes a change of address changes everything.

