

ADVOCACY

People First of Toledo Monthly Newsletter



**People First
of
Toledo**

The Capitol Crawl

By Quinn Thomas

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. It is a time to reflect on and honor our history. We especially need to remember the advocates who made it possible for us to get to the point where we are today. So, this March, let's talk about one of the most iconic, memorable protests in American history: the Capitol Crawl.

The Capitol Crawl took place on March 13th, 1990. The Americans with Disabilities Act was in the process of being passed, but it was stalled in the House of Representatives. Advocates weren't optimistic. So, they decided to do something. They demonstrated exactly why the ADA was so essential.

The disability rights group ADAPT organized over 1000 advocates to march from the

UPCOMING EVENTS

PEOPLE FIRST OF OHIO CONFERENCE

March 6 & 7, 8:00-2:00, at Deer Creek Lodge and Conference Center in Mt. Sterling, Ohio.

DD AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY DAY

March 12th, all day. Join in in-person at the Statehouse or virtually on Zoom.

LCBDD INCLUSION RESOURCE FAIR

March 13th, 5:30. At McLaren St. Luke's Hospital.

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Art will be displayed March 18-23. Artists must be served by the county board. Submit to marketing@lucasdd.org.

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

March 21st, all day. Celebrate however you can.

White House over to the United States Capitol Building. Once they got there, about 60 of those advocates abandoned their wheelchairs and crawled up the steps. There was no ramp. They had to drag their bodies up 78 steps to reach the Capitol Building. It was the only way to speak to Congress.

The youngest advocate there was a little eight-year-old girl with cerebral palsy named Jennifer Keelan. She already had two years of experience advocating for disability rights. She told the reporters there, "I'll take all night if I have to."

The Capitol Crawl was part of an entire week's worth of connected protests. The next day, advocates went to the Capitol building rotunda and demanded to talk with the Speaker of the House. 104 of them were arrested, including Jennifer's mom.

The protests didn't get a lot of



attention at the time, but the politicians there took note. They were ultimately successful. On July 26th of that same year, just four months later, the ADA was passed. Disability became a protected legal category.

Activism works.

OUR NEXT MEETING

March 21st, 6:00-7:30, virtually on Zoom or in-person at the Ability Center, at 5605 Monroe Street, Sylvania. Meeting dues are \$5 or \$50 for twelve months.

A guest speaker from the University of Toledo representing the Statewide College Consortium will teach about transition degree programs for people with developmental disabilities.