

Ms.
Wheelchair
A M E R I C A

2013

Defying Gravity

Pageant and Leadership Institute

August 6-12, 2012
Providence, RI



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August 6, 2012

Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.
255 Alpine Estates Drive
Cranston, RI 02921

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the citizens of the State of Rhode Island, I extend my warmest greetings to the participants and attendees of the 2013 Ms. Wheelchair America pageant hosted by Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.

I applaud the talented young women competing for the title, and hold great admiration for their courage and commitment to tackling the challenges in their lives head on. I especially want to thank Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. for its advocacy on behalf of the more than 52 million Americans living with disabilities. Your work is helping to change lives and attitudes.

I hope everyone taking part in this event will have an opportunity to explore all that Rhode Island has to offer. Rhode Island may be the smallest state in the country, but we pack stunning ocean vistas, strong ethnic traditions, a vibrant arts community, 12 colleges and universities, and much more into our borders. Easily accessible by plane, train, boat, automobile and wheelchair, Rhode Island offers a wide variety of activities from great restaurants and museums to beautiful beaches and parks. Our famous Narragansett Bay is home to some of the best boating in the world, and our shores provide some of the most stunning coastal roads in the world.

As Governor of Rhode Island, I can assure you that our most valuable asset is our people. Over the course of your travels in Rhode Island, you will meet men and women who love both what they do and where they live. We are proud of our beautiful state and welcome the opportunity to show it to you.

Again, welcome to the Ms. Wheelchair America pageant and best wishes for an exciting and inspirational pageant.

Sincerely,

Lincoln D. Chafee
Governor



Welcome Letter

Dear Contestants,

Welcome to Providence, Rhode Island. The Ms. Wheelchair America 2013 Pageant and Leadership Institute Committee is excited to have you here to experience a week of leadership, networking and friendship building. We truly hope that your memories from this week will last a lifetime and that the things you learn will inspire great deeds far beyond your individual reach. What started as a dream to host Ms. Wheelchair America, has finally come to fruition after 18 months of hard work and planning. We are truly honored that you are here to experience the event that we have invested so much of our lives in with us.

This week, be prepared to grow, to learn and to become the person that you want to be. By the end of the week, we guarantee you will be cheering each other on as you roll across the stage and let everyone know what you do best. We encourage you to take this time to form a plan on how you are going to use your new skills and resources when you return home to make your communities a better place. Remember that strength in numbers is powerful; the connections that you will make will only make your individual messages stronger by recruiting others to stand by you and advocate with you. Most importantly, do not forget to try to relax and have some fun; it isn't very often that you will be in the presence of so many wonderful, inspiring and powerful women.

Providence's founding father Roger William once said, "The greatest crime in the world is not developing your potential. When you do what you do best, you are helping not only yourself, but the world". Many of you are here because what you do best is advocate on behalf of people with disabilities and inspire others to make changes to the world around them. Over the next week, we hope that you will become even stronger advocates and leaders in your communities. Through leadership development workshops, sharing your experiences with others and just being around so many empowered women; we hope that you will take what you do best to the next level. We want each and every one of you to leave this experience feeling like you can change the world.

Let's get out there and do what we do best, together let's change the world!

Autumn Grant
State Coordinator
Ms. Wheelchair MA

Kristen Connors
State Coordinator
Ms. Wheelchair RI



President's Letter

Dear Contestants, Family and Friends,

On behalf of the Ms. Wheelchair America Inc, Board of Directors, I would like to welcome you to Ms. Wheelchair America 2013, here in beautiful Providence, Rhode Island. You are about to embark on an amazing week that you will remember for the rest of your lives.

This incredible program was first started in 1972 by Dr. Philip Wood who wanted to promote the achievements of amazing women who also, just happened to use wheelchairs. Now as we celebrate our 41st year, we must look back and thank Dr. Wood for giving so many women through the years the opportunity to become involved with Ms. Wheelchair America.

I want to congratulate you on all you have achieved to get here. You truly represent what Ms. Wheelchair America is all about, and I am proud to have you all here to show off your talents, accomplishments and personalities. A big thank you needs to go out to your state coordinators. They are the reason we are all here. They put their time, effort and sometimes their personal funds to make this all possible.

I must thank my co-host state coordinator, Autumn Grant from Massachusetts and our volunteers and committee members for their hard work putting this week together with us. The passion for Ms. Wheelchair America is like none I have seen before, and their hard work and dedication is the reason we are all here this week.

Finally, thanks to all of you for being here and helping us recognize and celebrate these amazing women!

Kristen Connors

Kristen Connors
President, Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc



History

In 1972 Dr. Philip K. Wood of Columbus, Ohio, had devoted his career to treating and rehabilitating persons with functional impairments. During his practice, he became aware of the talents, capabilities, determination and courage of persons with disabilities. As a result, he established Ms. Wheelchair America as a forum for promoting the achievements and accomplishments of women who utilize wheelchairs for mobility, as well as the needs of all persons with mobility challenges.

The mission of Ms. Wheelchair America is to provide an opportunity for women of achievement to successfully educate about and advocate for the more than 54 million Americans living with disabilities. The Ms. Wheelchair America Program is in no way a traditional beauty contest.

Purpose and Goals

Each year the Ms. Wheelchair America Program holds a competition to select the most accomplished, articulate spokeswoman for people with disabilities. The titleholder must be able to communicate and educate the public, business community, and lawmakers regarding the dignity, productiveness and basic value of people with disabilities. Ms. Wheelchair America continues to eliminate the architectural and attitudinal barriers that prevent people with disabilities from assuming their rightful place in society.

Ms. Wheelchair America has numerous duties. During her reign, she has the opportunity to travel, visit advocacy groups, make public appearances, and conduct interviews. Ms. Wheelchair America promotes her chosen platform in a variety of settings. She serves as a positive role model for the next generation of Americans with disabilities inspiring them to leave their own legacy. Her commitment and personal example serve to further the mission of Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc.

The pageant is made up of a multitude of activities. This allows the judging panel time with the state titleholders, while enabling the competitors an opportunity to share with each other and develop friendships. The titleholders become stronger advocates throughout the week because of the variety of interesting workshops that strengthen them. These workshops develop skills that heighten awareness on issues within the community and open a dialogue between the women and their thoughts, ideas, values, and experiences.

The Ms. Wheelchair America, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that is staffed and coordinated totally by volunteers from many different organizations, businesses, private citizens, and previous titleholders. It is through the monetary and in-kind support of the many sponsors that the national titleholder is able to fulfill her duties throughout the year and travel across the country with her message of empowerment for people with disabilities. The Ms. Wheelchair America Program is actively seeking sponsors and volunteers and would appreciate any support that is offered.



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1973	Patricia Nevins	Michigan
1974	Janie Robinson	Texas
1975	Kathy Smith-Tiley	Alabama
1976	Dixie Lee Etheridge	Mississippi
1977	Beverly Chapman	Florida
1978	Margie Sloan	Georgia
1979	Marge Chmielewski	Michigan
1980	Nancy Pudvin	Georgia
1981	Vivian Thompson	Massachusetts
1982	Marian Schooling-Vessell	Maryland
1983	Barbara Crozier	Alabama
1984	Gaynell Colburn	Maryland
1985	Lori Cottam	Utah
1986	Donna Cline	Nevada
1987	Sandra Honbaier	North Carolina
1988	Peggy Simpson	Alabama
1989	Jewell Massey	Georgia
1990	Kathy Garcia-Farnsworth	Utah
1991	Mercedes Rodriques-Fowler	Florida
1992	Deanna Green-VanHook	Texas
1993	Kim Mensi	Alabama
1994	Dawn Blodgett	California
1995	Wendy Petzold	Wisconsin
1996	Amy Baxter-Ley	Texas
1997	Elaine Stefanowicz	Washington
1998	Terri Cecil	Kentucky
1999	Christina Gilmore	Wisconsin
2000	Tracy Charlton-O'Connor	South Dakota
2001	Nicki Ard	South Carolina
2002	Candy Marsh	Colorado
2003	Catherine Gugala	Wisconsin
2004	Cinda Hughes	Oklahoma
2005	Juliette Rizzo	Maryland
2006	Kristen Connors	Rhode Island
2007	Autumn Grant	Massachusetts
2008	Kristen McCosh	Massachusetts
2009	Michelle Colvard	Texas
2010	Erika Bogan	North Carolina
2011	Alexandra McArthur	North Carolina
2012	Josie Badger	Pennsylvania



2008



2009



2010



2011



2012

Judging

The contestants will have three private judging sessions with the panel of judges during the week. On Friday evening each state titleholder will present a two minute speech. The speeches are also judged. During the Saturday Crowning Gala the five contestants with the highest scores will answer two on stage questions. After the scores are tallied, the runner-ups will be announced followed by the new Ms. Wheelchair America 2013.

Workshops

During the week the contestants will take part in many workshops. These workshops are designed to provide information on topics that will help each state titleholder develop various skills that are needed to be an effective advocate in their home states, while building relationships with each other. Some of the topics include: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), dealing with Social Media, Legislative Issues, and A Year in the Life of Ms. Wheelchair America.

Events and Activities

The week will begin with an opening ceremony and orientation. There will also be a traditional New England Clambake. This year's theme night will be a Pajama Party just for the ladies, where they can relax, be pampered, and will have the opportunity to meet Stacey Shieffelin, President of ybf, who will speak about the importance of empowerment from the inside out. Jennifer Kumiya, Ms. Wheelchair California's State Coordinator, will sing at the crowning ceremony. A few surprises are also planned.



It is hard for me to believe that I am currently writing this synopsis of my year as Ms. Wheelchair America 2012. This year has been filled with countless new opportunities and the ability to meet hundreds of amazing individuals throughout the country and world.

As I reflect on the conferences, events, meetings, and appearances, the most amazing part of my experience has been the people. For me, the crown has not been about a title or a status, rather it has served as a spark to light the flame of empowerment. Disability is not synonymous with inability. During the first night of the Ms. Wheelchair America 2012 pageant, I presented my platform of "youth leadership and empowerment." Youth empowerment is one of my passions and I was excited to share it with the other state titleholders, but little did I realize that I would soon be sharing this passion with the world.

Throughout my reign I have had the opportunity to continue to share my platform and directly support youth development. I had the chance to attend the One Young World in Zurich Switzerland, an international youth leadership summit. Although I was representing America, I quickly realized that I was also there to empower people with disabilities.



I then traveled to Alaska where I presented to the Association of Programs for Independent Living. Youth with disabilities who live in rural communities often face unique challenges in becoming independent, empowered leaders. I had the opportunity to assist youth in developing their leadership skills as well as discuss the barriers faced by this population of rising leaders.



MWA 12 with her amazing mentor Ida

In an attempt to warm up from the chilly Alaskan weather, I traveled south to support the Ms. Wheelchair Arizona pageant. But a northern girl cannot leave the cold for long so my next adventure was Ski for Light in South Dakota. I had the amazing opportunity to ski for the first time and ride a snowmobile (snow machine).

Throughout the following six months I have been able to speak and volunteer in New England, Tennessee, Iowa, North Carolina, New York, and Rhode Island. This past year has been full of amazing experiences and new opportunities. I am so grateful to have had the chance to share my platform of youth empowerment and leadership throughout the world.

In April of 2011 I began my Ms. Wheelchair journey with the quote, "a candle loses nothing by lighting another candle." After this year of serving as Ms. Wheelchair America, I disagree. A candle is illuminated when it lights another candle. The flame of empowerment is uncontrollable.

Thank you Ms. Wheelchair America for allowing me to light this spark of empowerment across the world.

As Justin Dart would say, "I love you, Lead on, Lead on."

Josie Badger

Ms. Wheelchair America 2012

Emcee for Crowning Ceremony



John DeLuca helps the people of Southern New England stay informed weeknights at 5, 6 and 11.

A New England native, John was born in Worcester and grew up in Rhode Island. He graduated from Cranston East High School and URI.

John began his career at ABC6 in 1999, after working as a sportscaster at WCBI-TV in Columbus, Mississippi and as a news reporter and fill-in anchor at KMPH-TV in Fresno, California.

Since coming to ABC6, John has covered a wide range of local and national stories, and he has anchored ABC6 News in the morning and at noon. John was also selected to play the role of newscaster in the 2007 Disney film "Underdog" which was filmed in Rhode Island.

John is married to his beautiful wife Amy. They have two young sons Jack and Sean. When not at work, John enjoys playing golf, watching the Patriots, Red Sox, Celtics and spending time with his family and Beagle named Duke.

Emcee for Platform Speeches



Stacey Schieffelin, founder and president of ybf (your best friend), has engineered a 15-year record of success in direct sales on HSN (USA), QVC (UK) and The Shopping Channel (TSC Canada) and The Television Shopping Channel (TVSN Australia) that has built a loyal, worldwide consumer base of women with cosmetic and apparel sales in excess of \$150 million!

Stacey forges a highly personal relationship with her consumers, guiding them on their journeys to self-actualization and fulfillment using the power of beauty. As a former Ford Model for 20 years, renowned beauty expert and highly successful entrepreneur, she is frequently sought by national magazines such as Self, Glamour, Allure, ELLE, Good Housekeeping, Marie Claire and Fitness, and has been featured and quoted in countless beauty books. Stacey was named one of "America's Power Women" by Ladies' Home Journal. She was honored to ring the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange in celebration of the POWER of women owned businesses. She is recognized as Connecticut's Female Entrepreneur of the Year - 2012.

Stacey is proud to announce the launch of her inspirational and entertaining talk radio show "Strength in Sharing" with co-host Shelly Maguire.

Ms. Wheelchair Alabama



Michele Miller lives in Anniston and works at the Hilton Garden Inn. She is a certified medical office assistant. She attended New World College and is also certified in Business Office Education. Michele likes traveling, cooking, poetry, DIY projects, reading, and singing. She has Spastic Cerebral Palsy. Michele describes herself as outgoing, strong willed, and intelligent.

Ms. Wheelchair Arizona



Stephanie Pope lives in Chandler and works at the South Mountain Family YMCA. She obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Northern Arizona University. She enjoys meeting weekly with her "Living Well with Disabilities" group, attending and dancing at concerts, and scrapbooking her photos and memories. Stephanie has Muscular Dystrophy and describes herself as considerate, confident, and caring.

Ms. Wheelchair California



Mary Zendejas lives in Long Beach. She owns the Disabled Professional Association. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree at the California State University in Long Beach. Mary enjoys social events, movies, live performances, concerts and community service events. She was diagnosed with Post Polio. Mary describes herself as hard working, positively passionate, and enthusiastic.

Ms. Wheelchair Colorado



Anna Aranda lives in Aurora and is a peer mentor at Craig Hospital. She received an Associate of Arts degree in psychology from the University of Phoenix. Anna enjoys working out in the gym, being outdoors, shopping and mentoring newly injured people. She suffered a spinal cord injury in 2003. Anna describes herself as kind-hearted, spontaneous, and reliable.

Ms. Wheelchair District of Columbia



Dawn Jennings lives in Washington, DC. and recently worked as the Independent Living Specialist for Montgomery County for Independence NOW Inc. She is currently seeking employment as a writer/editor or speech pathologist. She recently obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from Trinity University. She enjoys writing, listening to music, watching game shows, mentoring disabled youth and helping others. Dawn has cerebral Palsy and describes herself as assertive, trustworthy, and dedicated.

Ms. Wheelchair Florida



Laura-Lee Minutello lives Valrico and works at Parent to Parent Connection, Inc. She studied psychology at the University of Central Florida. She enjoys reading, working out, and playing guitar. Laura-Lee has cerebral palsy and describes herself as strong, ever-learning, and compassionate.

Contestants

Ms. Wheelchair Illinois



Kimberly B. Brown lives in Chicago and works in Chicago public schools. She obtained a BA in reading, an MA in School Administration, and a BA in elementary education from St. Xavier University. She obtained a BA and MA in Reading and an MA in School Administration from Concordia University. She enjoys playing wheelchair tennis, making jewelry, and spending time with friends and family. Kimberly has Spina Bifida and describes herself as determined, motivated, and poised.

Ms. Wheelchair Indiana



Amber O'Haver lives in Avon and works as an Independent Living Advocate at AccessAbility Center for Independent Living. She obtained a Bachelor's and Master's Degree at Ball State University. She likes spending time with family and friends, surfing in Southern California, volunteering at local animal shelters, and breaking down barriers that individuals with disabilities face in order to achieve more inclusive communities. Amber has a spinal cord injury and describes herself as passionate, inquisitive, exuberant, ambitious, and driven.

Ms. Wheelchair Iowa



Jayde Henry lives in Des Moines and works at DLH GraF/X. She obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Fashion and Retail Management at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh Online Division. She enjoys reading, drawing, playing with her pets, and volunteering within her community. Jayde is a paraplegic and describes herself as friendly, gregarious, and dependable.

Ms. Wheelchair Kansas



Emily Evans lives in Bucklin and works at BTI, Inc. She obtained a Bachelor of Management from Fort Hays State University. She enjoys coaching volleyball, reading, being outdoors, and spending time with her niece and nephews. Emily is a C5/C6 Quadriplegic and describes herself as strong, intelligent and blessed.

Ms. Wheelchair Kentucky



Heidi McKenzie lives in Mt. Sterling and works at McKenzie Concrete. She received a Bachelor's Degree in Small Business Management and a minor in Spanish at Morehead State University. She enjoys painting, kayaking, fishing, and spending time with friends and family. Heidi is a T-4 paraplegic and describes herself as social, entertaining, and active.

Ms. Wheelchair Maine



Sarah Rosenblatt lives in Portland and works at Maine Medical Centers Poison Center. She studied Early Childhood Education at Andover College. She enjoys Iris Network, Maine Handicap Skiing Race Team, Maine Adaptive Sports and Ms. Wheelchair Maine Organization. Sarah has Cerebral Palsy and describes herself as outgoing, cheery, and helpful.

Ms. Wheelchair Maryland



Courtney Wallace lives in Havre de Grace and is the CEO of Inside Out Enterprises. She obtained a Certification of Life Coaching at PCCCA. She enjoys working out, being outdoors, reading, and watching old black and white movies. Courtney is a T-4 paraplegic and describes herself as outgoing, bubbly and independent.

Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts



Patti Panzarino lives in East Wareham and works at Olysys Publishing Co., Inc. She obtained a BA at Hofstra University. She enjoys writing and performing music, public speaking, cooking, boating and going to the beach. Patti has Spinal Muscular Atrophy type 2 and describes herself as ambitious, creative, and empathetic.

Ms. Wheelchair Michigan



Stephanie Deible lives in Grant and is currently a full-time student studying journalism at Grand Valley State University. She enjoys traveling, writing, sports, and attending Campus Crusade for Christ Fellowship. Stephanie has Cerebral Palsy and describes herself as compassionate, optimistic and determined.

Ms. Wheelchair Minnesota



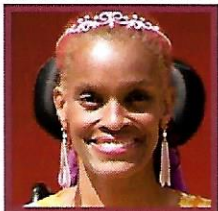
Paula Gleisberg lives in Eden Prairie where she is a student at the University of Minnesota. She received an Associate of Arts degree at Normandale Community College. She enjoys reading historical novels, writing, drawing, and dealing with the ins and outs of insurance coverage advocating for her needs. Paula has spastic cerebral palsy affecting all four extremities and describes herself as driven, open-minded and caring.

Ms. Wheelchair Missouri



Kristine Jones lives in St. Louis and works as a Behavioral Health Clinician at SSM Hospital. She obtained a BS Criminal Justice in 2009 with Summa Cum Laude honors and Professional Counseling/psychology in 2011 from Lindenwood University in St. Charles Missouri. She enjoys handcycling, swimming and playing cards with friends. Kristine is diagnosed as "incomplete paralysis with SCI – L1/L2 injury from domestic abuse. She describes herself as kind, considerate, and happy.

Ms. Wheelchair New York



Pamela Hall lives in the Bronx and volunteers in her tenant community association. She received a Bachelor of Science at Allen University and a BA at Benedict College. She enjoys painting, dance, animals and reading. Pamela was injured in a car accident and describes herself as persistent, optimistic and faithful.

Contestants

Ms. Wheelchair Nevada



Rhoda Mills lives in North Las Vegas where she is a Clark County Assessor. She studied Business Management at the College of Southern Nevada. She enjoys spending time with family and friends, shopping, attending cultural events, concerts and bowling. Rhoda is a paraplegic and describes herself as adventurous, trendy, and fun-loving.

Ms. Wheelchair North Carolina



Kristian Champion lives in Ellenboro and volunteers at her church doing missionary work. She obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Public Relations at Gardner-Webb University. She enjoys learning Korean language online, being the lead singer in her church choir, coordinating for the youth department at church and spending quality time with her family every weekend. Kristian has Spina Bifida and describes herself as outgoing, ambitious and determined.

Ms. Wheelchair Ohio



Angela Hunter lives in Wooster where she is a landlord. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree at Wright State University. She enjoys writing poetry, collecting gem stones, and going out with friends. Angela is a C-4 Quadriplegic and describes herself as creative, empathetic and dedicated.

Ms. Wheelchair Oklahoma



Jesa Lopez lives in Oklahoma City and works at Aspiring Attitudes Dance Studio. She studied Crime Victim/Survivor Services at Oklahoma State University. She enjoys lyrical ballet, jazz, and hip hop, performing and acting, social work, and hunting. Jesa has a C-6,7, T1 spinal cord injury resulting in paralysis from the chest down and describes herself as creative, adventurous, and sparkly.

Ms. Wheelchair Rhode Island



Katrina Horsch lives in Warwick and works at Classic Chimney. She obtained a Bachelor's Degree in English at Rhode Island College. She enjoys writing, reading, fashion, gaming, and singing. Katrina has Spinal Muscular Atrophy and describes herself as creative, empathetic, and unstoppable.

Ms. Wheelchair Tennessee



Jean-Marie Lawrence lives in Chattanooga and volunteers at Disability Resource Center at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. She enjoys volunteering for the Muscular Dystrophy Association, reading, participating in Women's Center activities. Jean-Marie has Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy and describes herself as charismatic, determined, and creative.

Ms. Wheelchair Texas



Mariah Rose Kilbourne lives in Converse and works for the City of Seguin – Economic Development and Main Street. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies at Texas Lutheran University. She enjoys adaptive sports (basketball and track are favorites), volunteering at the Majestic Theatre, and going to concerts and movies. Mariah has Cerebral Palsy and describes herself as positive, determined, and adventurous.

Ms. Wheelchair Utah



Brittany Cox lives in Logan and volunteers at Top of Utah Entertainment. She studied Elementary Education at the Utah State University. She enjoys singing, dancing, reading, and drama. Brittany is a paraplegic and describes herself as happy, kind, and positive.

Ms. Wheelchair Virginia



Stephanie Copeland lives in Richmond and owns her own business, Fortune Hi-Tech Marketing. She obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Business at Strayer University. She enjoys coaching softball, dancing the electric slide, mentoring and making others laugh. Stephanie has a spinal cord injury and describes herself as positive, fun loving, and passionate.

Ms. Wheelchair Wisconsin



Amy Bleile lives in Whitewater and works as a substitute teacher at Whitewater and Palmyra School districts. She received a Masters in Social Work and in Special Education from the University of Illinois (Champaign) and UW-Whitewater. She enjoys wheelchair basketball, swimming, mentoring foster children, and tutoring children and adults with learning disabilities. Amy is a spastic quadriplegic and has cerebral palsy and describes herself as passionate, ambitious, and determined.

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Judges



Head Judge, Carl Daughtery is a native of North Little Rock, Arkansas. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Philander University, Jacksonville, Arkansas. He graduated from the University of Arkansas Currents Leadership Institute in 2005. In addition to his education, Mr. Daughtery has an exemplary background in business and public relations. In 2009, Carl was appointed as Chief of Field Services for Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. Before his appointment, he served as the interim Chief of Field Services, and he served as the District Manager for five years for Vocational Rehabilitation Field Services Program which covered North Little Rock, Conway, Russellville, and Lonoke field offices. He is actively involved in several organizations as a volunteer to include serving as a prior MWA judge. In 2006, Mr. Daughtery became involved with Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas as head judge and judge.

Carl and his beautiful wife Cynthia have one son, Carl, Jr. He plays an active role as a husband and father. As Chief of Field Services, he is committed to continuing his services using his leadership skills and encouragement serving Arkansas and individuals with disabilities.



Erika Bauer is from Cedar Springs, Michigan. She currently attends the University of Detroit Mercy Nursing School where she will be a senior this fall. She was selected as Miss Michigan Teen serving from 2007 to 2009. She was second runner up to Miss Teen of America in 2008. During those two years, Erika was a judge for the Ms. Wheelchair Michigan Pageant in both 2008 and 2009. Erica currently works in the intensive care unit at Blodgett Hospital in Grand Rapids, Michigan.



Julie Mayberry is the mother of Arkansas' first 'Little Miss Wheelchair Arkansas, Katie Mayberry. She is a 1993 graduate of Emerson College in Boston, Massachusetts where she obtained her Bachelor's degree in Broadcast Journalism. Currently, she is the owner of Mayberry Advertising and the East Ender Newspaper in her community. She is the past co-host KATV, channel 7 morning show "Daybreak" in Little Rock and the past co-host and weathercaster for WSAU, Savannah, GA. Julie actively serves as an Advisory Board Member for Arkansas Dept of Education and Special Education, and Community Connections. Mrs. Mayberry is the past President of Little Rock South Lions Club, and has volunteered with the Arkansas Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities and the Ms. Wheelchair Arkansas program.

July 2012, she held the grand opening of the "I CAN! Arts and Resource Center" for people with disabilities, which she built with grants and donations. In 2007, she established the "I CAN!" Dance class for children with disabilities. Mrs. Mayberry produced a 30 minute video entitled "Project Eli" which stands for *Every Life Inspires*. The video is to help families who have a child with Spina bifida. Julie is dedicated to creating positive changes for individuals with disabilities.

She is married to Arkansas State Representative Andy Mayberry and is the proud mother of four beautiful daughters, Ellie, Katie, Zoe and Courtney.



Susan Rotchy is Ms. Wheelchair California 2007. She currently resides in Northern California with her husband and two children. Sixteen years ago Susan was in an automobile accident which left her paralyzed. Since her accident she has become an activist for people with disabilities beginning with enforcing the community college to become ADA compliant. Since her accident she obtained her Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Golden Gate University. In 2000, she was instrumental with the passage of the Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act. She also had an active role in the passage of Proposition 71, for Stem Cell Research and Cures Act 2004. Susan is one of the co-founders for Research for Cure, a non-profit organization which raises money for neurological diseases and has assisted in raising over \$500,000 dollars for the Reeve Irvine Research Center at UC Irvine. She has received a personal thank you from the late Christopher Reeves and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger for her outstanding and continuous work in advocacy.

Today, Susan serves as the Executive Director of Independent Living Resources of Solano and Contra Counties. She is an active member of the "In Home Support Services Advisory Council" and serves as Vice President of Research for Cure. Susan continues to play an active role in advocating for people with disabilities and pushing for continued medical research.



Gary Witman, M.D. resides in Providence with his wife Dee. He graduated from Rutgers University and Downstate Medical School. Dr. Witman served 30 years as an Emergency Room Physician until his accident, which left him a quadriplegic. He currently works with a designing team creating software of electronic records. Dr. Witman also serves as an active member of a professional group working on evacuation equipment for individuals with disabilities. Gary is creating a non-profit resource handbook for individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island. Dr. Witman states that life is a different experience in seeing the world at 3' instead of standing. He states he now sees a world he has never seen before.



Judge Coordinator, Patricia Connors earned a Secretarial Certificate from Katharine Gibbs School in Providence. She retired a year ago after working for thirty-one years as the Executive Vice President of a local REALTOR® association. When not working part-time, she spends her time taking care of her two grandsons, Connor and Christopher Buonaccorsi. In addition to volunteering and serving on the MDA Executive Board, Pat has volunteered and assisted with coordinating the past Ms. Wheelchair Rhode Island pageants. She has also served on the host committee that has planned this year's national pageant. She resides in Cranston, RI, and is the mother of twin daughters who were born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy, Kelly Buonaccorsi and Kristen Connors, Ms Wheelchair America 2006.

Judging Criteria

The Ms. Wheelchair America judging is based upon criteria established by the national committee of the Ms. Wheelchair America Program. The following excerpts were taken from the official guidelines:

- A. Accomplishments
 - 1. Personal Achievements and Accomplishments since Disability in the following areas:
 - a. Academic
 - b. Vocational
 - c. Personal
 - 2. Adjustment to Disability
- B. Community Skills
 - 1. Ability to deal with media, peers, civic groups, etc.
 - 2. Public Relation Skills
 - 3. Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities
 - 4. Self-confidence—Motivation—Initiative—Creativity
- C. Self Perception—Projection
 - 1. Poise and Demeanor
 - 2. Appropriate Attire and Personal Presentation

Ms. Wheelchair America Creed

As Ms. Wheelchair America, I promise to do my best
To promote public awareness of people with disabilities,
To use my time and efforts to this purpose,
To strive to achieve the best that is within me,
To offer my hand in friendship to everyone I meet,
To be cheerful, honest and loving,
To give hope to the less fortunate,
To set an example by my attitude, and
To do all this with grace, warmth and dignity.

Special Awards

Lifetime Achievement

The Lifetime Achievement Award is chosen by the judges to the contestant they believe has made the largest contribution and significant impact for people with disabilities.

Nicki Ard Achievement

The Nicki Ard Achievement Award recipient is chosen by the judges and awarded to the woman who exemplifies the philosophy of Nicki Ard, which is to "always exhibit a positive attitude and be willing to serve others." The delegate will have made an outstanding contribution to the disability community through her talents, her efforts and example.

Outstanding Speech

The Outstanding Speech Award is chosen by those in attendance on Speech Night. Each individual attending receives one vote to cast for the contestant they feel delivered the most memorable speech of the evening.

People's Choice

The People's Choice Award is presented to the person that gets the largest number of votes, which cost \$1 per vote. A portion of the funds raised will be used for the MWA 2013 travel fund. People's Choice votes can be purchased anytime during the week.

Congeniality Award

The Congeniality Award is chosen by the contestants. Each contestant casts one vote for the contestant they feel was the kindest, friendliest, most helpful and caring during the week.

Business Award

The Business Award is chosen by the various businesses that present workshops, attend events, or interact with the contestants. They will give this award to the contestant they feel was able to communicate on a variety of topics.

The Ashley Speicher Courage Award

The Ashley Speicher Courage award was established by the Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts Foundation to honor the life of Ashley Speicher a board member, former Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts and most importantly a friend. The recipient is selected by the judges and awarded to the woman who exemplifies Ashley's life and philosophy "You may have many failures, but you just keep trying. You learn something from every failure. It doesn't matter whether you fail four or five times, don't give up. You will eventually succeed".

Ms. Wheelchair America 2013 Pageant and Leadership Institute Sponsors

The Ms. Wheelchair America 2013 Pageant & Leadership Institute sincerely thanks and gratefully appreciates the generosity of the following sponsors:

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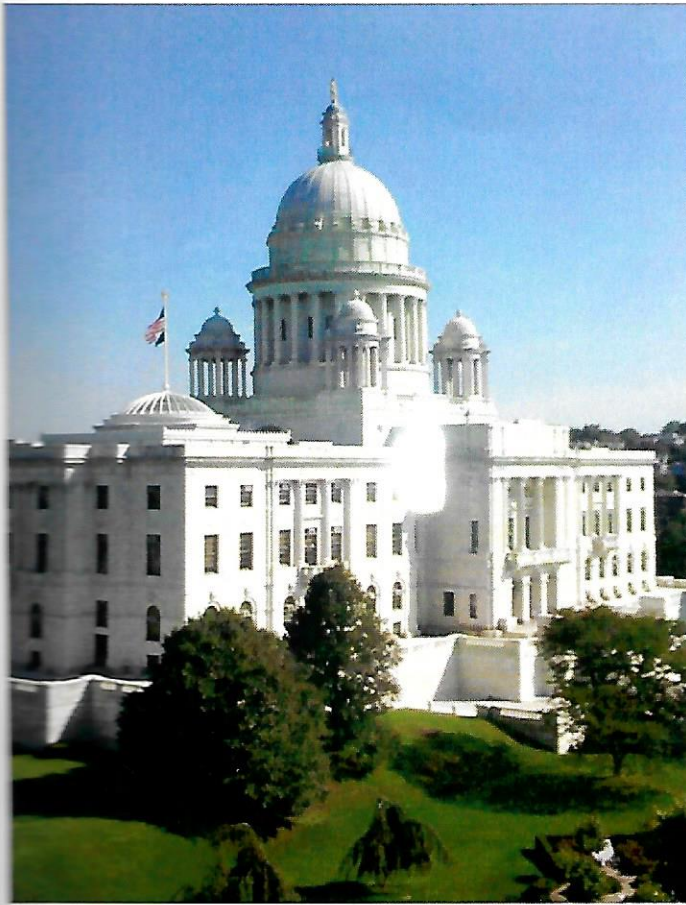
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Ms. Wheelchair
Rhode Island



*Congratulations and
Good Luck to
Katrina Horsch,
Ms Wheelchair
Rhode Island 2012*



Congratulations Patti Panzarino
Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts
2012

From the Ms. Wheelchair Massachusetts
Foundation



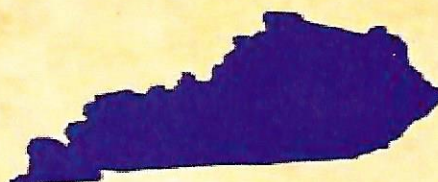


The Entire Commonwealth of
Kentucky wishes you Good Luck!

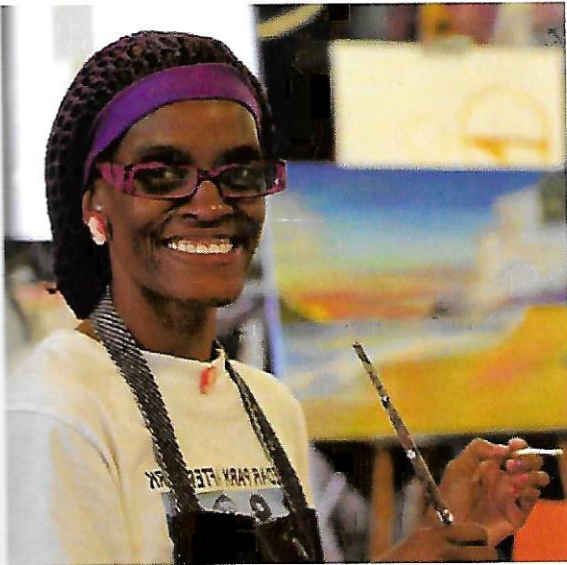


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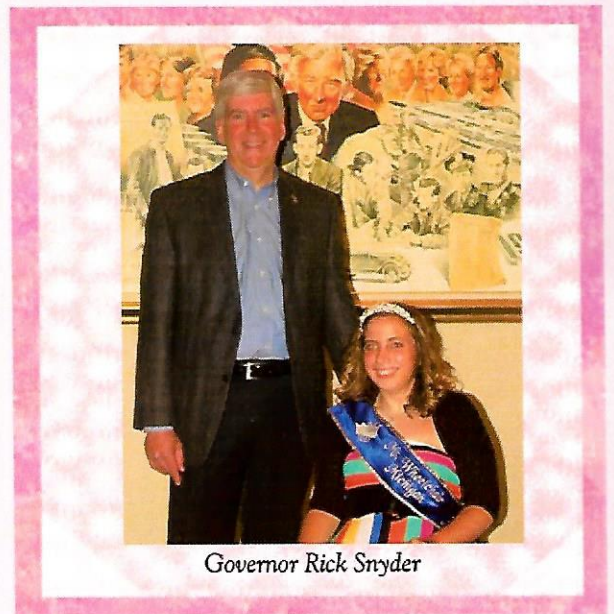
Pamela Hall

all the best in the
Ms. Wheelchair America
Pageant 2013!

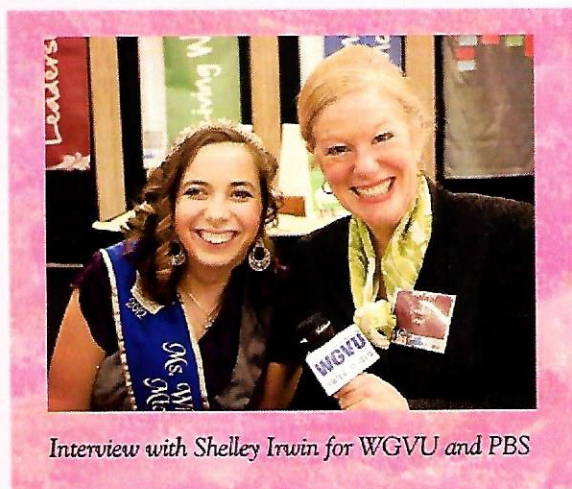
Pamela Hall has been a member of Independence Care System for over four years. The successes of Pam and the rest of the Ms. Wheelchair America finalists reflect the outstanding achievements of women living with disabilities across America. We congratulate all of the finalists!

Independence Care System operates a nonprofit Medicaid managed long-term care plan in New York City. We are dedicated to supporting adults with physical disabilities and chronic conditions to live at home and participate fully in community life.

To find out more about ICS, call 1-877-ICS-2525 or visit us at www.icsny.org.



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Interview with Shelley Irwin for WGTV and PBS



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Ms. Wheelchair Michigan 2012



Ms. Wheelchair Michigan and
Miss Wheelchair Michigan Hannah Ullom



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**Ms. Wheelchair California 2012
Mary Zendejas ... A Woman of
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**A true leader by example ...
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**Bring it Mary !!!
Best of luck in the Ms. Wheelchair America 2013 Pageant !!!
We Love you !!!**

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**Good luck
Stephanie!
WOW them
just like you
have
WOWED us!**

**Proud to have you as our
Titleholder! Bring it at
Nationals! You Can Do It!**

**We are so proud of you for all your
efforts advocating for the needs
of people with disabilities. We
know you will achieve great
success nurturing your Positive
Spin on life. Hope IS your future.
We love you and hope your
message is heard loud and clear.
Love, Mom & Dad**



**Best of Luck
and Many
Blessings!
We hope you
bring home a
new crown!
We love you!**



**Keep making a
Difference in the lives of
others. You're doing
great! Good Luck in R.I.**

**Ms. Wheelchair Virginia 2012, Stephanie Copeland
Platform of Advocacy: Taking a Positive SPIN on Life**

VIRGINIA
is cheering you on! You can do it!



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**We are so proud of you!
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Ms Wheelchair Iowa 2012



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**Congratulates Jayde Henry,
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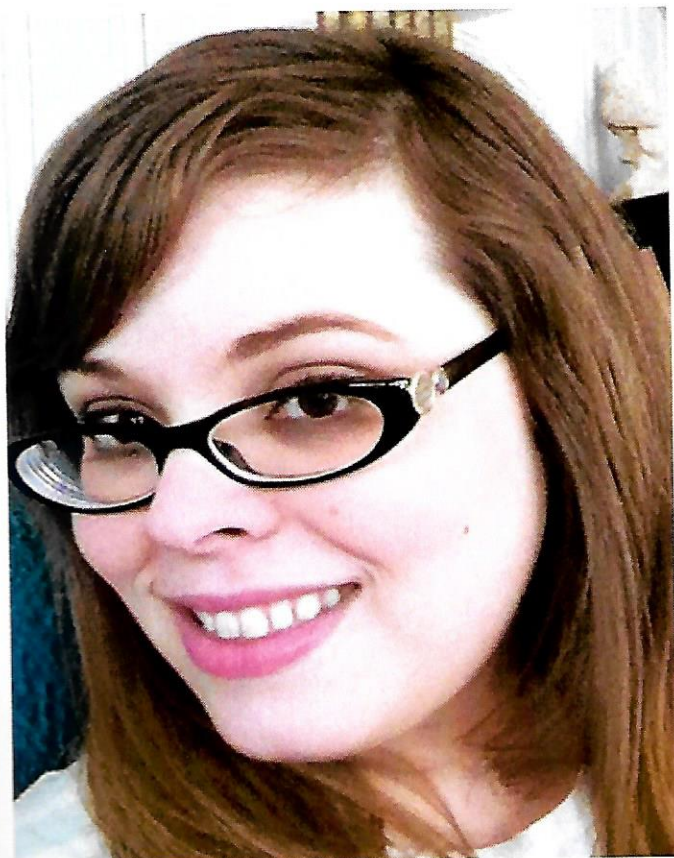
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*Best Wishes to
Katrina Horsch*

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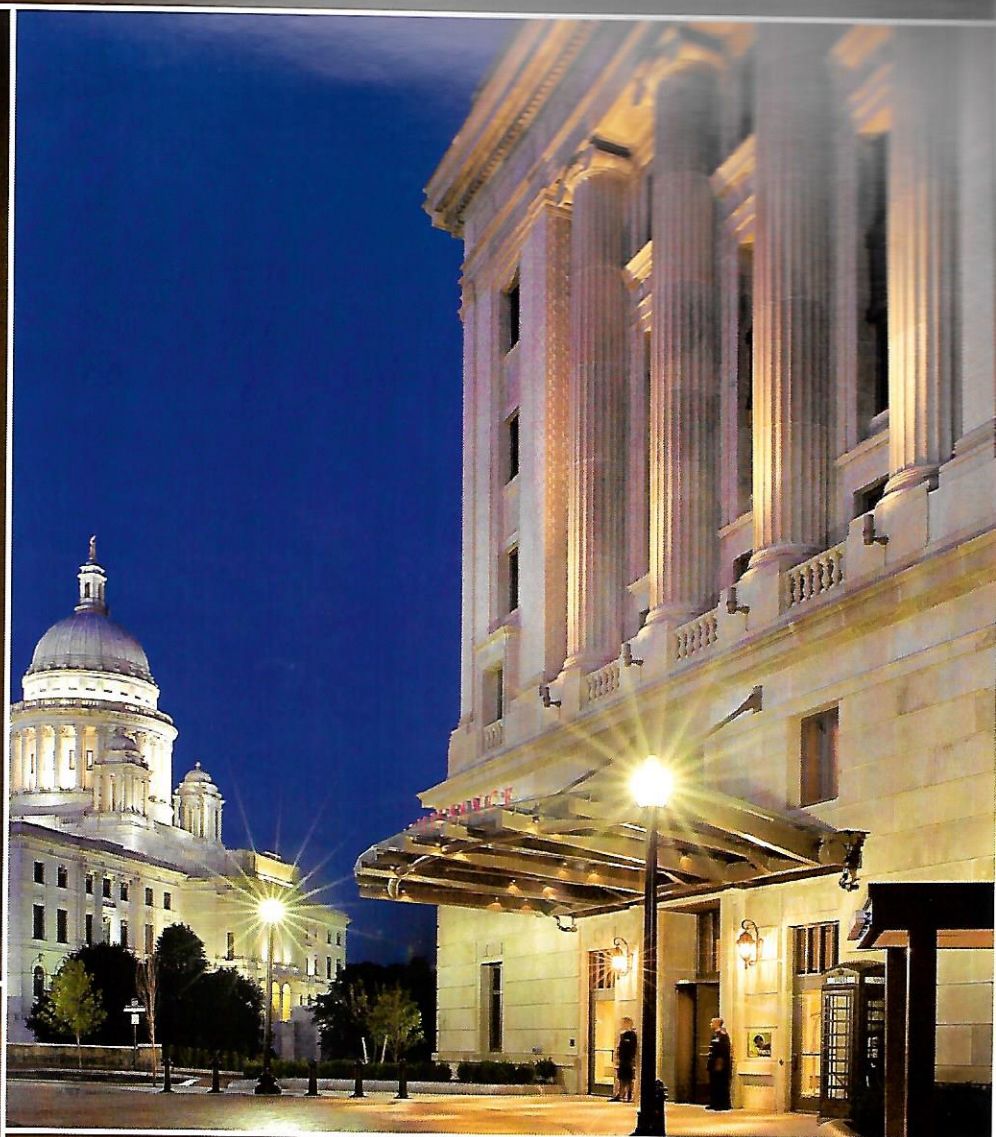
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O Magazine
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In this years

Ms. Wheelchair America Pageant

Special wishes to our Ms. Wheelchair America
of every year....Kristen Connors

Enjoy Rhode Island!!!!!!

Love,

Ed Garrahy & Family

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Ms Wheelchair America 2013

Best wishes to the contestants and supporters!

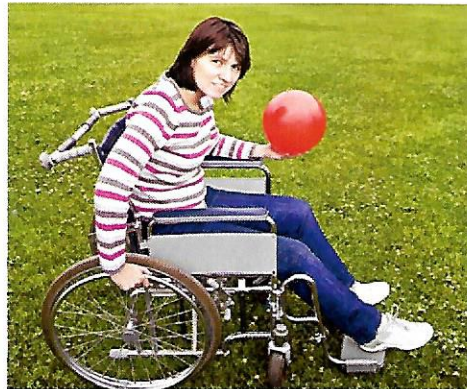


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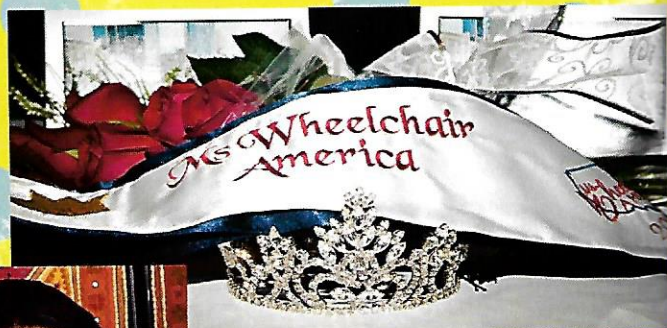
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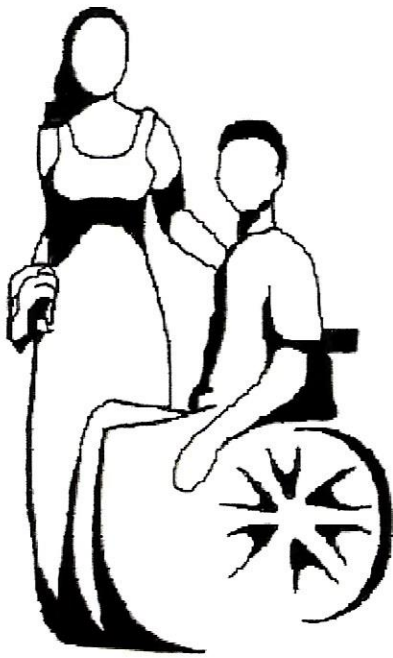
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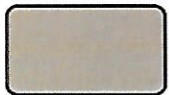
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Albert Schweitzer

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*The Ms. Wheelchair America 2013
Pageant and Leadership Institute
Committee*

*would like to thank all of the volunteers
who have given so generously of their
time and talents to help make this year's
Pageant a memorable event.*

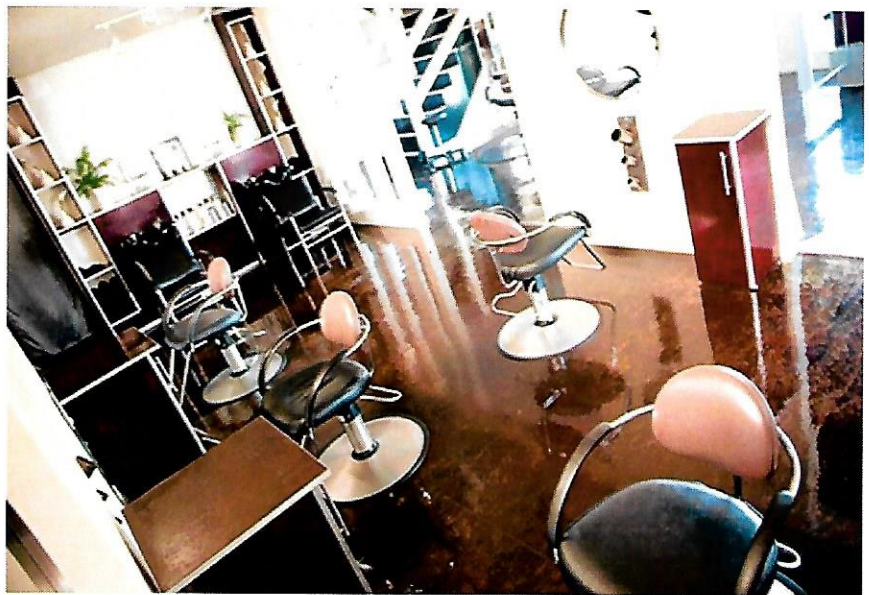
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**Congratulates all of the Ms. Wheelchair
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GOOD LUCK to all in the**

**2013 Ms. Wheelchair
America competition!**



Carl Daughtery
Chief of Field Services
Arkansas Rehabilitation Services
and 2013 Ms. Wheelchair Judge



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"This pencil is
irreplaceable!"
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nothing compares!" —Kelly

"I'm a brunette and my sister is
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BEHOLD *the* BEAUTY

As a proud sponsor of the 2013 Ms. Wheelchair USA pageant, Permobil admires your poise, beauty and strength. We encourage all women to achieve and believe in themselves.

A man in a black suit and striped tie stands behind a woman seated in a black Permobil wheelchair. The woman is wearing a white off-the-shoulder wedding dress with gold polka dots, white gloves, a large white flower in her hair, and large hoop earrings. She is smiling and looking up at the man, who is also smiling and looking down at her. They are in a room with white curtains and a potted plant in the background.

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THE POWER OF MOBILITY™