

## 1 ADA Legacy Bus Tour July-December 2014

The ADA Legacy Bus recently completed the first portion of our cross-country tour commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Overseen by The ADA Legacy Project, the bus has partnered with many sponsors and organizations around the country to accomplish this extraordinary effort, which covered more than 11,000 miles with stops at city halls, disability organizations, public schools, universities, disability conferences and Abilities Expos, while driving through 18 states.

Tom Olin, a social documentarian of the disability rights movement for over 30 years, has proven a familiar face on the tour. His photographs have been featured at the Smithsonian Institute and at the United Nations, as well as in the Washington Post and numerous publications and books. Tom has served as a unifying force in connecting communities across the nation to educate the public on 25 years of the ADA.

### ***History of the ADA Bus***

The ADA bus was originally procured for the 2006-2007 Road to Freedom, a tour which promoted the importance of the 2008 amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act. This tour was inspired by the historic 50-state journey taken in 1983 by Justin and Yoshiko Dart as a fact-finding mission for the National Council on the Handicapped. The Darts toured again in 1988, that time to garner grassroots support for the burgeoning Americans with Disabilities Act.

The present ADA Tour builds on these past efforts by paying tribute to the cross-disability efforts that culminated in the passage of this historic civil rights legislation. We invite communities nationwide to come together in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the ADA this coming July 26, 2015.

### ***About the 2014 - 2015 ADA Legacy Tour***

The 2014-15 tour began with an impromptu champagne christening by Youth Organizing (YO)! Disabled and Proud, a grassroots disability rights group led by and for young adults and youth with disabilities. Christina Mills, Deputy Director of the California Foundation for Independent Living,

and Sarah Triano, Executive Officer at the California Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities, arranged the spirited event at the capitol building in Sacramento, California. The energy was palpable and unifying.



Christening the bus

Mentoring young leaders with disabilities is one important aspect of The ADA Legacy Project, as well as supporting their fresh interests, outlooks, and political work. Communication between three generations of disability leaders and advocates has been an especially fruitful outcome of the tour. When people with disabilities, especially young people, see the bus, their initial reaction is excitement, followed by photos and selfies with the ADA Bus and its crew.

Despite the success of organizations like YO!, there are still problems of segregation, undereducation, unemployment, and institutionalization in the disability community. The disability civil rights movement coalesced later than other civil rights movements, and mainstream society still does not honor, respect, or integrate disability culture. For young leaders who experience exclusion and bullying even today, connecting with the bus and affirms their own worth as part of a strong, vibrant community. For the pre-ADA generation, the bus and exhibits draw out their knowledge of history and validate their life experiences.

The ADA Tour travels with interactive exhibits that draw people with disabilities of all ages and cultures. These include:

- A four-panel display on the history of self-advocacy, courtesy of the Museum of disABILITY History;
- Displays on The ADA Legacy Project and its efforts to preserve disability history, celebrate major milestones and educate future generations of disability advocates;
- "Because of the ADA . . ." booth where advocates post their thoughts and photos to illustrate the difference the ADA has made in their lives;
- The ADA quilt where advocates add their signature to thousands of others who have participated in the Tour;
- Displays on the history of the Road to Freedom Tour;
- An information table with handouts on The ADA Legacy Project and the ADA Network, plus information from the project's partners and sponsors; and
- Events, workshops, artifacts, and other programming provided by local hosts.

### ***The Vision***

The ADA Legacy Project was conceived by Mark Johnson, Director of Advocacy at the Shepard Center in Atlanta, and further developed during a retreat with disability leaders from across the nation. The first retreat was held at the Shepherd Center. This group set the goals of the project:

#### **Preserve**

We preserve our past by partnering with those who work to collect, promote and exhibit materials from the disability rights movement.

#### **Celebrate**

We celebrate our present by partnering with those who work to honor the milestones and accomplishments of the disability rights movement, including the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

#### **Educate**

We educate our future by partnering with those who work to raise awareness

of the history, contributions and issues still facing people with disabilities, developing our next generation of advocates.

## ***2014 – 2015 ADA Bus Tour Timeline***

### **July 2014**

After picking up the bus and making needed repairs to it, Tom Olin and co-pilot David Fulton drive from Sacramento to Houston.

Houston, Texas

The ADA Legacy Tour kicks off on July 25, 2014, at the Houston Abilities Expo. A national partner of The ADA Legacy Project, the Expo is a three-day event that brings together products, services, and information for people with disabilities and seniors, their families and caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

Lex Frieden, Director of the Independent Living Research Utilization Program, and also one of the major figures behind the ADA in the 1980s, leads a press conference to open the Tour.



Houston Mayor Annise Parker read a proclamation signed by Texas Governor Rick Perry, naming July 26, 2014, as ADA Awareness Day.

### **August 2014**

Parsons, Kansas

With Tim Wheat as co-pilot, the ADA bus makes its first sponsored gas stop (funds for a tank of gas are paid by a sponsoring organization) on a Sunday afternoon at Southeast Kansas IL Resource Center Satellite. Swag and stories are shared by all.

#### Des Moines, Iowa

A quick stop in Des Moines brings Senator Tom Harkin, a great friend to the disability community and key ally in the passage of the Americans with Disabilities, out to meet the bus and greet spectators of the bus.



#### St. Paul, Minnesota

The ADA Bus joins the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities at their August meeting, where the Council unveils another segment of the disability rights history series they have developed as a count-down to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADA. Their latest segment highlights the 5,000 documented accounts of discrimination that were collected from across the nation that helped push for the passage of the ADA.

Colleen Wieck, Executive Director of the Council, shares that the tour "... illustrates the commitment and courage of those who fought for fairness and justice for those who have disabilities."



## September 2014

### Washington, Pennsylvania

The ADA bus makes a pit stop so crew can speak to staff and consumers at Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living (TRIPIL) as they have a place for the bus to stay and plug in for the night. TRIPIL's Board of Directors decides to loan Tom a new camera for the tour. Special thanks to TRIPIL for their support!

### Boston, Massachusetts

Robin Stephens and Haley Kimmet join the bus as co-pilots in Boston. They take a multi-day hiatus from driving as it goes from a moving vehicle to a jumbo display at the Boston Abilities Expo from September 5 – 7. Here, the bus is set up with exhibits and the video *Lives Worth Living*, focused on the history of the ADA. Attendees of the Expo meet long-time disability activists and ADA-generation advocates from local Centers for Independent Living and the ADA National Network who have volunteered to support the bus and share information.

After navigating Boston's very narrow streets, the ADA bus makes its next stop at the Mission Hill K-8 School. Here, the bus is greeted by more than 250 students with and without disabilities. These students hear stories of the fight for the ADA from Haley Kimmet, Robin Stephens and Tom Olin, as they look at the display of photos. Several students are inspired to share their own advocacy experiences as disabled students, telling of how supportive peers and school personnel have enhanced their education.



### Allentown, Pennsylvania

Staff and community members at the Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living (LVCIL) welcome the ADA Bus to their newly built center in Allentown, PA. Followed by interviews with local media, ADA bus crew members are introduced to participants in several hallmark programs, including the S2L Group, a year-long transition program for youth to build advocacy and employment skills.

### Millersville, Pennsylvania

Professor Thomas Neville and his students at Millersville University host the ADA bus for a jam-packed two-day stop in connection with Millersville's ADA Legacy Tour Conference. The stop features disability history presentations, films and performances and culminates with presentations led by ADA bus crew members Haley Kimmet, Tom Olin and Robin Stephens. Students design protest signs and join the ADA bus for photos. Millersville University celebrates the full inclusion of their first college student with an intellectual disability and administrators affirm their commitment to including more students with diverse disabilities in the future.



### Washington, Pennsylvania

The ADA bus makes a return stop to the Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living office. Here, the crew meet with local media and receive a write-up in the local newspaper. Crew members get a chance to meet with Lucy Gwin on September 28 and hear her perspectives on the changing disability community.

### **October 2014**

### Louisville, Kentucky

Staff and community members representing a number of local disability organizations gather at the Center for Accessible Living office to greet the bus during a quick stop in Louisville. ADA bus crew members are given a quick tour of the office.

### Memphis, Tennessee

The ADA bus receives a warm reception at the Memphis Center for Independent Living when it is greeted with dozens of colorful protest signs and cheers from consumers and staff. Outside, MCIL has erected a display featuring photographs and descriptions of people with disabilities who have made significant contributions to the disability rights and independent living movements.



### Little Rock, Arkansas

The ADA bus rolls into Little Rock and joins a press conference at the Arkansas State Capitol. A good turn-out on short notice of more than 40 people supports the ADA and future disability rights progress. Attendees include representatives from the Arkansas Governor's Office, the Arkansas General Assembly, the Governor's Commission on People with Disabilities, the Arkansas Independent Living Council, Disability Rights Arkansas, Arkansas School for the Blind, the Pulaski County Election Committee and Spa Area Independent Living Services.



### Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

An enthusiastic group of advocates and family members participating in Oklahoma's Partners in Policymaking welcome the ADA Bus to Oklahoma City. Long-time disability rights activist Nancy Ward offers encouraging words of support to ADA bus crew.

Albuquerque, New Mexico

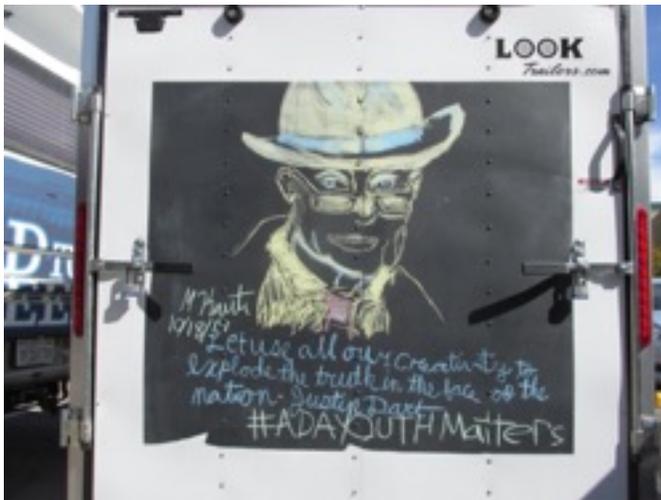
The ADA bus links up with the Southwest Conference on Disability, which hosted more than 3,000 participants, a multicultural gathering of nondisabled and disabled people Latino and indigenous people from several tribes are present. Attendees of all ages, colors, and backgrounds are enthusiastic about the ADA Bus and the ADA Legacy Project information table. During this stop, the ADA quilts, made by Corbett O'Toole, are displayed for the first time and attendees are encouraged to sign the back of the quilts. The ADA Bus, parked just outside the ADA Legacy table, is flooded with attendees taking photographs throughout the three-day conference.

Keith Gardner, Chief of Staff for Governor Martinez of New Mexico, recognizes contributions of The ADA Legacy Project during his conference speech.



The ADA bus continues to the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) Conference in Albuquerque, the most diverse stop of the tour in terms of race, age, gender and disability. Large numbers of people with developmental disabilities and physical disabilities join together. Attendees flock to The ADA Legacy Project table to read about our history, sign the ADA quilt, and get **ADA 25** t-shirts. Tom Olin and Janine Bertram invite other elders, Marsha Katz and Bob Liston of Montana, and Joseph Ray from the Laguna Pueblo, to present the keynote address. They end with a ceremony featuring elders from the disability rights movement as they pass the “talking stick” to the youth. The youth are more energized than usual with a ceremony transferring leadership. “Our stories are our power...Olmstead brought us to community.”

Photo link: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jonwick/sets/72157648820838382/page9>



Artwork using Justin Dart, Jr.'s quote: "Let us use our creativity to explode the truth in the face of the nation."

Gallup, New Mexico

San Juan Center for Independence Gallup Satellite sponsors the ADA Legacy Tour as we stop at the Rio West Mall, a stop that was organized after Ken Collins saw the bus at the APRIL Conference. A City Council member and others talks to the gathering, the ADA quilt was signed by many tribes, and food is shared.

**November 2014**

Fresno, California

The bus stops at a California State University, Fresno, in an event sponsored by Resources for Independence for Central Valley. Tom Olin shares stories with students and community members. The group takes photos of the bus.

Marin County

Marin Center for Independent Living organized this bus stop at the College of Marin. Students and community members enjoy greeting the bus and people learn ADA history and take photos.

Hayward, California

Banners and tables are set up in Hayward City Hall and a short program is presented by the city and staff from Community Resources for Independent Living. A Mayor's Proclamation is read and congressional staff and local advocates share their support. Thank you to Community Resources for

Independent Living (CRIL) for sponsoring this great event!



### San Francisco, California

Marilyn Golden, Senior Policy Analyst at the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, interviews Tom Olin for a StoryCorps interview about the history of the disability rights movement. StoryCorps is archived at the Library of Congress.

### San Jose, California

The ADA bus drives in San Jose, where it joins the San Jose Abilities Expo from November 21 - 23, 2014. Here, Erica Jones, of the Regional ADA Training Center, and Christina Mills, Deputy Director of the California Foundation for Independent Living, coordinate the participation of local advocates to draw people of all ages and cultures to the Tour and interactive exhibits. Especially popular is the photo booth with ADA-themed props.

The ADA bus introduces its new “Because of the ADA” cards that participants can fill out with their own stories. One memorable response received is, “Because of the ADA, I’m no longer someone who can be put in the back and ignored. I’m no longer shunned. I’m not invisible anymore.”



### Berkeley, California

The bus tour continues on to Berkeley and the famous Ed Roberts Campus, where it is greeted by disability rights activists, old and new. The Ed Roberts Campus buildings are particularly famous because they were built with universal accessibility as a first priority and house a number of progressive disability rights organizations, including the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, the Berkeley Center for Independent Living, and other organizations that made significant contributions to the passage of the ADA. **ADA25** t-shirts and calendars are sold.

## **December 2014**

Phoenix, Arizona

The ADA bus begins its journey back east, first stopping at the Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL). Here, the bus spends the day at the Disability Empowerment Center and numerous people, disabled and non-disabled, attend from the Phoenix area. Phil Pangrazio, Executive Director of ABIL, arranges an inclusive event with city officials and cross-disability representation. For an example of the promotion around this event, visit <http://www.abil.org/2015freedombus/> and <http://www.azfamily.com/good-morning-arizona/inside/Road-to-Freedom-Bus-passes-through-Arizona-284904931.html>

## **January 2015 and Beyond**

The bus continues to roll with more than 40 stops scheduled for 2015 and a brand new bus wrap, thanks to donations and extraordinary support from Miami Trailer (<http://www.miamitrailer.com/about-us/>) and the U.S. Business Leadership Network.

As we inch closer and closer to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADA, we're learning of national and local celebrations being planned to commemorate the impact of the ADA. We look forward to joining disability community leaders in Washington, DC, on July 26, 2015!

