



# MOVING FORWARD, LOOKING BACK

MEMBER NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM THE MUSEUM OF DISABILITY HISTORY

WINTER 2013: VOLUME 5



Senator Gallivan and Assemblyman Ray Walter presenting the bill and pen, passed and signed by Andrew Cuomo, to Dr. Boles (middle). This legislation gave way to December 3rd being known as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

## International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrated at the Museum of disABILITY History

On Monday, December 3rd, the Museum of disABILITY History hosted a celebration commemorating legislation sponsored by Senator Patrick M. Gallivan and Assemblymember Crystal Peoples Stokes, officially establishing December 3rd as “International Day of Persons with Disabilities.” Senator Patrick M. Gallivan, joined People Inc. and several other community advocacy organizations and community members at the Museum of disABILITY History. Guests including Assemblyman Ray Walter and Council Member Steven Sanders of the Town of Amherst commented on their continued support of the region’s disability advocacy efforts.

Senator Gallivan spoke of the impact of disability on his own life. The inspiration for his commitment to advocacy stemmed from supporting a friend who became a quadriplegic at the age of 21 after a tragic car accident. Later, his commitment was strengthened after

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## Hello Dollies!

The Museum of disABILITY History was delighted to receive a generous donation from Fisher-Price, Inc. this last quarter. We now have three My American Girl® dolls as part of our collection. Robert Tom, Senior Director, Product Engineering Services at Fisher-Price contacted the Museum with the offer of donation, and delivered the dolls. This line of popular dolls has been around since 1995, and has allowed purchasers to customize their traits and create their personalities. Recently the manufacturer has added some features that help to fit them into the “play-ability” section of our Museum.



*Pictured above with the newly donated dolls, Tess Fraser, former Director of the Museum, Robert Tom, Senior Director at Fisher Price, Inc. and Douglas Platt, Museum Curator.*

One of the dolls is without hair and has a hearing aid. She is aimed at girls affected by cancer, alopecia, or any medical condition causing hair loss. “This new product line provides even more possibilities for a girl to create a doll that’s as unique as she is.” The second doll has brown hair, brown eyes and is using a wheelchair for mobility. The third has red hair, blue eyes and is being assisted by a brown service dog-in-training named Chocolate Chip.

These recent acquisitions fit in nicely with future plans here at the museum. We are nearing completion on an exhibit titled “Little Differences” which takes a look at the historical depiction of children with disabilities in art, literature and in the media as “poster children.” We are also planning to develop activities to attract, involve and engage younger audiences and to heighten their experience here at the Museum.





## Unique Educational Collaborations

For the fifth year in a row, the Museum of disABILITY History is playing host to University of Buffalo students in the Family Medicine Program. About 150 medical students have been touring the museum during their holiday break. Museum Curator, Douglas Platt, provides students with an annual training session regarding the history of the treatment of persons who have disabling conditions. In one of the most ground-breaking approaches to teaching diversity concepts, the university invites ten people who have disabling conditions to speak to the medical students as well. These guest teachers prepare presentations. They talk to the students about their experiences with medical providers and how they prefer to be treated when attending a medical appointment. Andrew Symons, M.D., Vice Chair for Medical Student Evaluation at the university offered these comments about this unique collaboration;

**“Through visiting the Museum of disABILITY History and meeting with People Inc. staff, students explore the historic and socio-economic background to caring for people who have disabilities. This early exposure serves to increase student’s comfort level with working with patients who have disabilities and ultimately, will help them become better, more compassionate physicians.”**

In another similar collaboration, the students of UB 496 (Universal Design Yoga) learn about participation, disability and accessibility in their course work. Annually, they tour the Museum of disABILITY History as well. They frequently use one of the meeting rooms in the building for discussion after their tours. Susan Mann Dolce, Ph.D., Assistant Director for Consultation and Research in Accessibility Resources has said;

**“One of the highlights for the students every semester is their tour of the Museum of disABILITY History! Dave Mack-Hardiman is amazing and accommodating fitting us into their busy schedule. The students RAVE about Doug Platt’s knowledge and passion, bringing disability history to life as they tour the museum. We are all so appreciative of the work and the people at the Museum of disABILITY History.”**

Other groups are welcome to schedule tours of the museum - feel free to call (716) 629-3626 to set one up!

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his sister-in-law suffered a severe brain injury after she was involved in a car accident. His childhood friend has gone on to raise over \$1 million towards spinal cord research and his sister-in-law has surpassed recovery expectations, maintaining some independence in her daily care and acquiring a job in Erie Community Colleges Athletics Department. Senator Gallivan stressed that the International Day of Persons with Disabilities is a celebration of individuals just like his friend and sister-in-law and their accomplishments are a reminder to continue the advocacy efforts which have progressed our society this far.

Also at the event, Tess Fraser, former director of the Museum of disABILITY History, spoke how the legislation aligns perfectly due to the interest it has obtained from abroad through its website. Councilmember Sanders and Assemblymember Walter presented People Inc.’s President and Museum founder James M. Boles, Ed.D. proclamations from their respective bodies. The highlight of the event was Senator Gallivan presenting to Dr. Boles a framed copy of the bill and the pen used to sign it by Governor Andrew Cuomo.



## KIDS DAY at the Museum of disABILITY History!



President’s Day, Monday, February 18, 2013  
 Morning Group - 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
 Afternoon Group - 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**Kids on the Block performances!**

**Coloring Contest!**

**Movies!**

**Surprises!**

**Snacks!**

**Fun for all ages!**



**The Perfect Cure for Cabin Fever!**



Please call (716) 629-3626  
 or e-mail [pnowak@people-inc.org](mailto:pnowak@people-inc.org)  
 to reserve your spots!

# I Sing The Body Electric

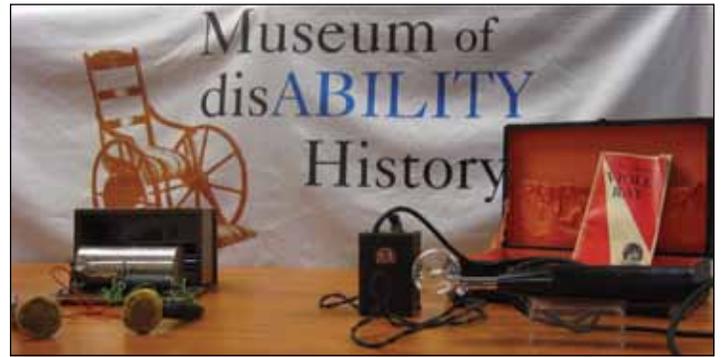
Douglas Platt, Museum Curator and Thomas Stearns, Research Assistant

The Museum of disABILITY History recently acquired two fascinating therapeutic instruments from the early twentieth century, both high frequency generators known as “The Master Violet Ray” and the “Monitor Electric Battery.” Both were made for in-home use and boasted, “no home should be without one.” Today’s entry focuses on the Master Violet Ray.

Manufactured by the Master Electric Company in Chicago, Illinois, the instrument is described as “a diffusion of an electrical current of tremendous power and resistance, into millions of tiny harmless units” and was purported to cure “innumerable instances” of illness and bodily discomfort.

Violet Ray devices were based on the theory that “all human ailments, with the exception of certain highly contagious and infectious diseases, [could] be traced to faulty circulation and impure blood.” When a person’s blood failed to circulate in a healthy manner, it became stagnant and absorbed impurities, resulting in “a condition of self-poison” that left the body susceptible to disease.

The Master Violet Ray’s “penetrating current” reportedly quickened vital processes and stimulated circulation, thereby washing away impurities from the affected region(s) and allowing the “purifying processes of nature” to occur. The blood, now free of poisons, was then “able to take up oxygen . . . and nutrition . . . and [return] laden with tissue-building material to every part of the body.” This process of regenerative stimulation, known as a “cellular massage,” restored energy and vitality to the entire bodily system – or so the manufacturer claimed.



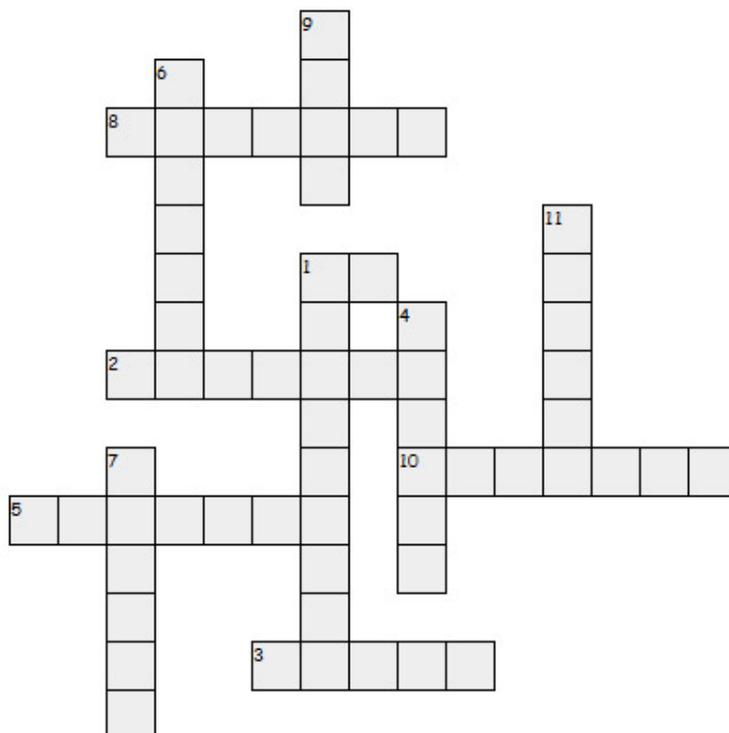
Customers applied the device’s electrical current through “vacuum applicators” or electrodes, which diffused the current into “sprays of a beautiful deep violet color.” These sprays vibrated to and fro thousands of times per second and produced the “pleasing, invigorating, and corrective effect” characteristic of the Master Violet Ray’s cellular massage.

The device could be applied to the “most delicate parts of the body without the slightest harm,” as indicated by the various types of applicators available for purchase – seemingly one for every orifice. If one so desired, they could acquire electrodes specially designed for usage on the eyes, ears, nasal cavity, and inside the throat. For the more adventurous, there were “urethral electrodes,” “vaginal electrodes,” and “rectal electrodes” – though the manufacturer stressed “competent supervision” for these applicators.

The novel technology used in Violet Ray devices, (they were made possible by the “Tesla coil,” invented by the “electrical wizard” Nikola Tesla in the

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## Kids Corner - share with your kids, grandkids, niece or nephew!



### Kids on the Block Crossword

Please complete the crossword puzzle below

#### Across:

1. Abbreviation for Mark’s disability
2. A system of reading using your fingertips
3. What the softball does that Renaldo uses to play
5. Mark’s nickname for his wheelchair
8. What the Kids on the Block characters have all become
10. A skill that David is really good at

#### Down:

1. The Kids encourage everyone to \_\_\_\_\_ their differences!
4. What is more important? Disability or Person
6. Eddy’s relationship to David
7. A disability that can affect communication
9. Renaldo uses one of these to avoid bumping into things
11. Mark reminds students to always wear one of these when using wheels or playing sports

beeps  
sorting  
cane  
autism

celebrate  
cp  
braille  
cruiser

helmet  
person  
friends  
brother

All of the clues in this puzzle are related to our 3rd Grade “Kids on the Block - disABILITY Awareness” program. The answers to each clue can be found in the “Kids Corner” section of our website at [www.kidsontheblockwny.org](http://www.kidsontheblockwny.org).

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1890s), along with their affordability and availability, made them an appealing option to people searching for quick and easy therapeutic relief. Endorsed by hospitals, sanitariums, and physicians, thousands of people across the United States used Violet Ray devices – and for a wide variety of issues, as suggested by this enticing advertisement from a late 1920s issue of *Popular Mechanics Magazine*:

*“Let us tell you how thousands of men and women suffering from rheumatism, neuritis, paralysis, nervousness, skin diseases, headaches, constipation, sprains, prostate trouble, goiter, and many other ailments, even hay fever and asthma, have found quick relief— new health and vitality with this marvelous, scientific invention. Pains vanish almost instantly.”<sup>1</sup>*

However, despite assurances that there was “no quackery or uncertainty” about the healing powers of Violet Ray devices, the U.S. Federal Food and Drug Administration sued manufacturers in the 1950s for “false and misleading” therapeutic claims.<sup>2</sup> Shortly thereafter, Violet Ray devices became illegal to produce and advertise, and most units were ordered destroyed. Master Electric Co., which manufactured our device, was the last of over three dozen manufacturers to exist in the United States.<sup>3</sup> Today, Violet Ray devices are still produced outside of the U.S. and are still used in Europe.

Although manufacturers may have exaggerated the therapeutic potential of Violet Ray devices, they certainly did not lie when they stated that these devices “last indefinitely” – ours still works beautifully.

#### Sources:

- The Master Violet Ray instructional booklet (Master Electric Co., publish date unknown)
- FDA Papers, Volume 1 (U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 1967), 36, <http://archive.nlm.nih.gov/fdanj/bitstream/123456789/12749/3/ddnj04319.pdf>
- *Popular Mechanics Magazine*, vol. 50, no. 5 (Hearst Magazines, November 1928)

#### For more information on Violet Ray devices:

- <http://www.electrotherapymuseum.com/MuseumVioletRays.htm>
- Ellis Neiburger, “Shocking Dentistry: Modern Clinical Applications for an Old Dental Device,” *Chairside Magazine* (Fall, 2009); <http://www.glidewell dental.com/dentist/chairside/issues/fall2009/clinical-techniques1.aspx>
- Paul S. Cohen and Brenda H. Cohen, *America’s Scientific Treasures: A Travel Companion* (American Chemical Society, 1998), 312.
- Bill Fawcett, *It Looked Good on Paper: Bizarre Inventions, Design Disasters, and Engineering Follies* (HarperCollins, 2009), 229-231.

Special Thanks to Walt Whitman

1. *Popular Mechanics Magazine*, vol. 50, no. 5 (Hearst Magazines, November 1928)
2. FDA Papers, Volume 1 (U.S. Food and Drug Administration, 1967), 36 <http://archive.nlm.nih.gov/fdanj/bitstream/123456789/12749/3/ddnj04319.pdf>
3. <http://www.electrotherapymuseum.com/Articles/VioletRayMisconceptions.htm>

## Traveling Exhibit News

The Museum’s traveling exhibits bring the different topics in disability history to those who are unable to visit the Museum. Exhibits are for people of all ages and abilities who would like to know more about the history of people with disabilities. Traveling exhibits are available for presentations at schools, libraries, businesses, health organizations, conferences or special events - locally and throughout the United States.

**Self-Advocacy: A History of People Speaking Up for Themselves:** A four-panel banner stand that traces the Self-Advocacy movement from early educational facilities to the development of organizations established for and by individuals with disabilities. This exhibit was on display at the University of Connecticut and the Reel Abilities Film Festival.

**In the Game; Sports and Disability:** A three-panel banner stand timeline style exhibit that chronicles events and individuals who have transformed sport and recreation for people who have disabilities. This exhibit was on display at the University of Connecticut and the Western New York Psychology Conference.

**Reel Life: disABILITY goes to the Movies:** Many motion pictures have been made that have disability themes or actors with disabling conditions. This two-panel banner stand exhibit features some notable and award winning films and actors from the 1930s to 2010. This exhibit was on display at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford, Pennsylvania.

**War and Disability:** This exhibit looks at the American military and disability experience from the revolutionary war to present times. The New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks, Connecticut displayed this exhibit in the past quarter.

**Enhance your event. Educate your community.  
Reserve an exhibit today! 716.629.3626**

## NEW MUSEUM HOURS

Starting in February, 2013, the museum will offer new hours for visitors:

<b>Monday</b>	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Tuesday</b>	10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
<b>Wednesday</b>	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Thursday</b>	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Friday</b>	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Saturday</b>	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

In addition, the museum will be open on President’s Day, Good Friday, Veteran’s Day and, the day after Thanksgiving!

# Expanding Educational Programs in the Community

The Museum of disABILITY and People Inc. are now offering educational programming for all grades including Kindergarten through High School. Previously the “Kids on the Block of WNY” program was specifically presented to 3rd and 4th grades only. As of last school year, the Museum has developed a “Reading with a Puppet” program tailored for Kindergarten through 2nd grade, “disABILITY Etiquette” program for 5th and 6th graders, “Successes and Achievements” program for 7th and 8th graders which premieres in January 2013, and the “Critic Reader” program for grades 9 through 12.



Also premiering in January of 2013 is the “kNOw bullying!” program, a project of the Museum that has been developed for 4th grade students in conjunction with the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). DASA legislation was passed on July 1st, 2012 and requires every public school district in New York State to implement an anti-bullying initiative in their district which educates students about what bullying is, what to do to prevent it from happening, and how to report an incident if they become a target or witness. The “kNOw bullying!” program was designed with the purpose of not only educating students about bullying, to reinforce the information already



provided from the schools, but also to encourage students to be “stand-bymers” rather than just bystanders if they witness a bullying incident. Given the statistic that *children with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be bullied than their nondisabled peers* ([pac.org](http://pac.org)), the Museum is taking a proactive approach to support children with disabilities, who may or may not be able to speak up for themselves, by encouraging their peers to stand up for them and help decrease incidents of bullying for all students.

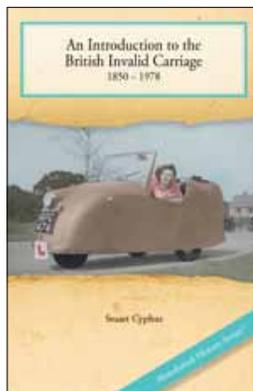
The following education programs were presented between January and December of 2012:

- K-2nd “Reading with a Puppet” Program – presented to **19 schools** for **1714 students**
- 3rd “Kids on the Block” disABILITY Awareness Program – **48 schools** for **4702 students**
- 5th “disABILITY Etiquette Program – **2 schools** for **301 students**
- **17 appearances at colleges, conferences, and local community events**

All of the education program presenters, with the exception of Brie Kishel, education coordinator, are volunteers from within and outside the People Inc. organization. Every volunteer involved is highly dedicated to educating children about disability awareness and promoting acceptance in the WNY community. Volunteers have been working exceptionally hard this year to help develop our new “kNOw bullying!” program by attending focus groups and practice sessions in addition to presenting all of the programs out at the schools. Without them, none of these programs would be possible. A tremendous **THANK YOU** to all of our volunteers as we prepare for another very busy year ahead!

## New Publications

The Museum of disABILITY History recently released two new publications – both of which feature the invalid carriage, a type of three-wheeled motor vehicle specially designed for people with physical disabilities. *Ivan the Invacar Helps Big Dog*, a children’s book written by President and CEO of People, Inc., James M. Boles, follows Ivan, a friendly, self-aware Invacar who becomes a reluctant superhero after some *shocking* events. Beautifully illustrated by Bob Cunningham (also of People Inc.), this is the first installment in a series of books about Ivan’s many exciting adventures. Sold separately at our museum store is a wooden replica of the Invacar, handcrafted by Amish artisans from the Hilltop Toy Shop.



Our second new publication, *An Introduction to the British Invalid Carriage (1850-1978)*, is an expertly researched account by invalid car enthusiast Stuart Cyphus (who maintains the Invalid Carriage Register – a unique British

organization that charts the survival and whereabouts of all remaining invalid carriages in existence). Containing rare photographs and details, this book explores the fascinating history behind these early adaptive devices, from the hand-propelled tricycles of the 1870s to the final withdrawal of all vehicles from service in 2004.

Visitors to the Museum of disABILITY History can experience an Invacar first-hand, as our collection features a 1963 Greeves-Thundersley Invacar, the only known Invacar in North America. This unique, fully restored vehicle is a favorite among children and adults. For more information, check out the museum in person or visit our online store at [store.museumofdisability.org](http://store.museumofdisability.org).



“Like” the Museum of disABILITY History on Facebook!

[www.facebook.com/museumofdisability](http://www.facebook.com/museumofdisability)

## Welcome New Members!

### Individual/Student

Jesse Palumbo  
Gina Carson

### Friend

John R. Drexelius, Jr.

Don't forget that as a member,  
you receive a 10% discount in the  
Museum Store!

[store.museumofdisability.org](http://store.museumofdisability.org)

## Do you want to be a blogger?

Check out the Museum's new blog at [blog.museumofdisability.org](http://blog.museumofdisability.org). There will be postings about various topics related to disability history. We would love to have some of our members volunteer to be guest-bloggers! If you are interested, please contact Museum Director David Mack-Hardiman at [dmack@people-inc.org](mailto:dmack@people-inc.org) or at 716.629.3606.

## Support the Museum, Become a Member!

Want to support the Museum of disABILITY History? Membership opportunities are now available! With five different levels to choose from, you can choose the one that is right for you. All supporting membership levels are good for one year.

The top three reasons to become a member are:

- 1 Support the only brick and mortar disability history museum
- 2 Unlimited free admission and store discounts
- 3 Invitations to exclusive events and exhibit openings

To become a member, please call 716.629.3626 or log on to our website at [www.museumofdisability.org](http://www.museumofdisability.org). Click on the "Support Us" tab, click on "Membership," and then "Membership Registration." Thank you for your support!

## Consider A Corporate Membership

\*All memberships are good for 1 year (12 months from start date)

- Six free admission passes for guests
- 50% discount on Museum admission for your employees
- 10% discount in the Museum Store year round if membership card is presented
- 15% discount for employee gifts and wrapping
- 15% discount on traveling exhibit rental and offsite presentations
- Invitation to "Friends of the Museum" appreciation event
- Complimentary 1/4 page ad in the Museum's newsletter (*complimentary design upon request*)
- Recognition in the Museum lobby and website
- Subscription to the Museum of disABILITY History's monthly e-newsletter and quarterly newsletter
- Invitations to Museum events and exhibit openings

“ I enjoyed the museum tour of disABILITY History. I truly did not ever realize all the accomplishments of those who are disabled, and what they have achieved. My favorite part was seeing the timeline of the history. I found it extremely fascinating. I would love to go back.”

- Claire

### MUSEUM INFO

3826 Main Street  
Buffalo, NY 14226  
716.629.3626  
[info@museumofdisability.org](mailto:info@museumofdisability.org)

[www.museumofdisability.org](http://www.museumofdisability.org)  
[store.museumofdisability.org](http://store.museumofdisability.org)

### ADMISSION

Adults (18 and up)	\$5.00
Students with ID	\$2.50
Seniors (60 and up)	\$2.50
People Inc./Human Service Employees with Museum Membership Card	FREE
Children (6-17)	\$2.00
Children under 5	FREE
1-hour guided group tour (Groups between 10-20 people)	\$25

### 2012-2013 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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*Chairperson*  
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Department of Mental Hygiene

### MUSEUM HOURS *(Starting Feb. 13)*

M W T H F: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Tuesday: 10:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.  
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
Sunday: Closed

### STAFF

David Mack-Hardiman - *Interim Museum Director*  
Douglas Platt - *Museum Curator*  
Brie Kishel - *Education Coordinator*  
Thomas Stearns - *Research Assistant*  
Paulette Nowak - *Museum Receptionist*

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Museum of disABILITY History advances the understanding, acceptance, and independence of people with disabilities. The Museum's exhibits, collections, archives and educational programs create awareness and a platform for dialogue and discovery.



[www.facebook.com/museumofdisability](http://www.facebook.com/museumofdisability)



[www.twitter.com/Musedisability](http://www.twitter.com/Musedisability)