

# Polk County Commemorates Disability History and Awareness Instruction Weeks

October 2009

Governor Charlie Crist signed into law Bill 856, on June 13, 2008, creating section 1003.4205 requiring school districts to designate the first two weeks of October each year Disability History and Awareness Instruction weeks. Over the next weeks help each other spread awareness throughout your school by participating in activities that will teach awareness of different disabilities to the students of Polk County Schools. The following ideas are taken from *Disability History and Awareness Resource Guide* <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/DisabilityHistoryandAwarenessWeeks.pdf>.

- ✿ Hang banners in the hall and/or use marquee to recognize Disability History and Awareness Weeks.
- ✿ Design posters, fliers, and/or buttons related to Disability History and Awareness, include biographical information on famous people with disabilities. **(Pages 15-16, *Disability History and Awareness Resource Guide*)**
- ✿ Recognize the achievement of students with disabilities in your schools and other people with disabilities in your communities **.(Pages 15-16, *Disability History and Awareness Resource Guide*)**
- ✿ Use school and district Web sites to promote disability history and awareness.
- ✿ Post a timeline of disability history in every school. Allow students to design timelines.**(Pages 17-21, *Disability History and Awareness Resource Guide*)**
- ✿ Encourage your media specialist to add *The Noodle*, the Florida Youth Council newsletter, to their materials. *The Noodle* may be downloaded free from: <http://www.familycafe.net>
- ✿ Encourage your school library to do a book exhibit to expand students' understanding and awareness of individuals with disabilities. **(list of suggested readings on**

**Pages 23-25, *Disability History and Awareness Resource Guide*)**

- ✿ Great tips to learn Disability Etiquette 101**(Pages 31-34, *Disability History and Awareness Resource Guide*)**.
- ✿ Proper People First Language **(Pages 35 - 37, *Disability History and Awareness Resource Guide*)**.
- ✿ Remember, to not make assumptions about what a person with disabilities can or cannot do. Help promote equal opportunities, and offer all students, faculty, and staff with disabilities, friendships to achieve a positive experience that will last throughout the school year.

Wednesday, October 21, 2009, Polk County Schools along with the State of Florida will participate in Disability Mentoring Day. Some of the students with disabilities in Polk County Schools will participate in Disability Mentoring Day by shadowing a Mentor in a job that interests them.

*Remember to encourage  
"Ability Awareness" all YEAR!*



## Disability History & Awareness Web Resources:



- [Disability Etiquette - United Spinal Association](#)  
A booklet that provides tips to follow to create positive interactions with people who have disabilities.
- [I'm Tyler...Don't Be Surprised](#)  
A video peek into the life of a kid with disabilities. Learn what a kid CAN do; it's much more important than what he can't.
- [Hearing Impaired Simulation](#)  
Activities that simulate various hearing impairments followed with facts on individuals who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.
- [Misunderstood Minds](#)  
This site is a companion to the PBS special Misunderstood Minds. It is designed to give parents and teachers a better understanding of learning processes, insights into difficulties, and strategies for responding. Be sure to try the firsthand simulation activities under each topic.

### [Multiple Intelligence Activity](#)

We all learn differently. Discover your learning style by completing this Multiple Intelligence activity.

- [Physically Impaired](#)  
An amazing online video clip of a young man with a severe orthopedic impairment.
- [Sim-Dis](#)  
This site contains a collection of computer based artifacts that simulate aspects of disability. It is intended that the simulations will be used for training and awareness raising activities with staff and for teaching students in areas where an understanding of disability is required.

## Handouts:

- [Disability History and Awareness: A Resource Guide](#)  
A 72 page resource booklet developed by FLDOE Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS).
- [Legislative History of Florida's ESE Program](#)  
A timeline of history of disability services in Florida.

*The mission of Polk County Public Schools is to ensure rigorous, relevant learning experiences that result in high achievement for our students.*

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