

Disabled In Action Of Metropolitan New York Brochure

DIA is the Oldest Cross-Disability
Advocacy Organization in the United States.

What is Disabled In Action? (DIA)

We are a civil rights organization committed to ending discrimination against people with disabilities – all disabilities.

We fight to eliminate barriers that prevent us from enjoying full equality in American society. Founded in 1970, DIA is a democratic, not for profit, tax-exempt, membership organization. DIA consists primarily of and is directed by people with a disability. We believe in the motto,

“Nothing about us, without us.”

What are DIA’s objectives?

To raise consciousness among people with or without disabilities concerning ableism, paternalism, and derogatory attitudes as well as laws and customs that oppress disabled individuals in American society. To enact and enforce effective legislation and budget initiatives promoting our ability to live independently by mandating equal access to:

- Education
- Employment
- Entitlements
- Health Care
- Housing

To provide the organizational basis for disabled activists to join in effective political action.

What Has DIA Accomplished?

- 100% Accessibility on NYC buses (1984)
- Local Law 58, 1987 (Residential Access)
- Creation of Paratransit Service (1984)
- Cinema & Broadway Theater Access
- First ADA Title 3 Lawsuit (1990)
- Expanded CurbCuts Citywide
- Access to NYC Housing Court
- Poling Site Access in NYC
- OneStep Access Program
- Access to Federal Courts

What is DIA's History?

Disabled in Action was organized in 1970 by Judy Heumann, a young militant disabled woman, and other disabled activists at Long Island University in Brooklyn. Heumann sued the New York City Board of Education when her application to obtain a teaching license was rejected because of her disability. Although the suit was settled out of court, the publicity it received served as the impetus for founding DIA.

DIA received the Fredrick Douglass Award in 1986 from the North Star Fund “for outstanding contributions to the struggle for political, social and economic justice . . . and for work that exemplifies the tradition of fighting for the rights of all people in the spirit of Fredrick Douglass.” North Star is a pastfunding source of DIA.

DIA believes that uniting the disability community in NYC, NYS, and the entire nation is essential if we are to become a force for change. As a civil right organization, DIA supports a society free, not

only of ableism, but also of racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia and economic exploitation. DIA therefore joins with many organizations and coalitions in combating injustice.

How is DIA Organized?

Membership in DIA is open to all who share our goals. Members are entitled to vote, run for office, receive our literature, and join committees. DIA is governed by a President, Legislative Vice President, Public Relations Vice President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and a Board of Directors. Officers and Board members are elected by and accountable to the general membership.

A new DIA Chapter can be formed by any group willing to abide by DIA's principals. Approval by DIA of Metropolitan New York is legally required.

Join Us . . .

DIA and disability rights activists have accomplished a lot since 1970. Federal laws like Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and The American with Disabilities Act (ADA), have improved lives in our community. But the job is not over! In the 21st century, America is still debating if health care for all is a human right and if the "social safety net" is a national responsibility. Disability rights today is not just about ASL interpreters, braille signage and wheelchair ramps. Disability rights is about deciding what kind of society we want to be. Many of today's most important issues: economic inequality, mass incarceration, drug abuse and homelessness are also disability rights issues.

A very wise man once said, "A society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its [disabled] members" Join us, as we fight to make a better society.

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