

## **First People to People First:**

### **The History of the Benton County Developmental Disabilities Program (Benton County and Oregon History in Bold)**

**Prehistory: Before recorded history, people in this area and around the world had people with developmental disabilities as integral parts of their communities. There is evidence that even the earliest humans cared for people with disabilities in families with the support of the community and people with disabilities contributed to the well-being of the community.**

1841: Dorothea Dix is appalled to discover that people with intellectual disabilities, emotional disabilities, criminal offences, substance abuse issues, and indigence are housed together in jails and almshouses under horrible conditions. She begins advocating for better conditions and special care facilities, schools and hospitals, for people with intellectual, emotional, and sensory disabilities. She plays a role in the founding of 32 mental hospitals, 15 schools for “the feeble-minded”, and a school for the blind.

**1843: Any justice of the peace in Oregon can declare someone a “lunatic” and care would be contracted to private individuals who bid to care for the person.**

**1847: Benton County is created by the Provisional Government of Oregon out of land inhabited by the Kalapuya. Between 1782 and 1833, an estimated 90% of the Kalapuya died from diseases such as smallpox and malaria brought by European settlers.**

1848: Samuel Gridley Howe founds the Massachusetts School for Idiotic Children, later renamed Walter Fernald State School. It is the first residential institution for people with intellectual disabilities in the United States and in the Western Hemisphere. Howe successfully shows that children with intellectual disabilities can be educated, leading many to advocate that they should stay at these schools permanently. Howe opposed this idea and advocated for the rights of people with disabilities and their integration into the wider community. The school was funded by the Massachusetts State Legislature.

**1851: Marysville, later renamed Corvallis in 1853, is designated as the county seat for Benton County.**

**1855:** The Kalapuya cede land in Benton County to the United States in the Treaty of Dayton. They were promised, “Whatever you may desire he (US President) will make it.” Promises were not kept.

**1855:** Corvallis is briefly the capital of the Oregon Territory before Salem was selected as the permanent seat of state government.

**1859:** Oregon becomes a state.

**1862:** The State of Oregon contracts with a private institution, Hawthorne Asylum, in East Portland to serve as a hospital for “the insane”.

**1868:** The fourteenth amendment to the constitution is adopted. The due process clause prohibits the denial of life, liberty, or property without due process. The equal protection clause requires equal protection under the law. It becomes the basis for the Brown v. Board of Education decision and these two clauses become important protections for people with disabilities.

**1875:** The US Congress passes the Civil Rights Act guaranteeing equal treatment in public accommodations. The Supreme Court finds the law unconstitutional in 1883. Many of the provisions become law in the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**1880:** The state legislature appropriates funds for the Oregon State Hospital.

**1883:** 372 patients transfer from Hawthorne Asylum to the Oregon State Hospital.

**1907:** The legislative assembly creates the Oregon State Institution for the Feebleminded as "an institution for the training, care and custody of feeble-minded, idiotic and epileptic persons." It is renamed Oregon Fairview Home in 1933, Fairview Hospital and Training Center in 1965, and Fairview Training Center in 1979.

**1908:** Thirty-nine people with developmental disabilities were transferred across town from the "asylum" (Oregon State Hospital) to Fairview. The "inmates" moved into two dorms at the rural site on 672 acres two miles southeast of Salem.

**1910:** Voters approve an initiative to create Eastern Oregon Insane Asylum, later renamed Eastern Oregon Training Center.

**1913:** Eastern Oregon Insane Asylum opens in Pendleton.

**1913:** The Board of Asylum Commissioners is replaced by the Board of Control to provide centralized administration of state institutions.

**1913:** The Oregon legislature passes eugenics legislation. The Anti-Sterilization League based in Portland gathers signatures and forces a referendum where voters strike down the law in perhaps the first and only referendum on eugenics in the US. Oregon had the only Anti-Sterilization League in the nation. They opposed eugenics on grounds that it was biased, lacked scientific backing, and was inappropriately harsh and malicious. They used the success of Australia, a former penal colony, as a rallying point. They were led by activist Lora Little who said these laws, “are asked for by persons who think they can set themselves apart from their kind and make themselves dictators over their less fortunate fellows.” The eugenics law’s main supporter was Oregon’s first female physician, Bethenia Owens-Adair.

**1917:** The Oregon legislative assembly creates the State Board of Eugenics which can order sterilization of institutional “inmates”. An appeals process was added in 1919 and it became codified in Oregon statute in 1920. The onset of World War I blunts opposition to the law.

**1917:** A commitment law is passed to ensure priority of people who are “feeble-minded” for admission to Fairview. The law also imposes an age limit of five or older for admission. The age limit is removed in 1921.

**1921:** Marion Circuit Court strikes down Oregon’s eugenics law as unconstitutional in *Cline v. Oregon State Board of Eugenics*.

**1923:** The Oregon legislature passes a new eugenics law.

**1927:** The US Supreme Court upholds the constitutionality of eugenics and forced sterilization of people with disabilities in *Buck v. Bell*. The court sided with “experts” that “the feeble-minded” were a “menace” to society and “sap the strength of the state”.

**1929:** A Fairview manual notes that more than 300 residents were sterilized.

**1930s:** Institutions such as Fairview that had been built to train, habilitate, and release persons, become places where they go to live for the rest of their lives. Those who have severe forms of disability are seen as custodial, and efforts to teach them are largely abandoned. Those in the institution who are seen as higher functioning and trainable do receive training, but largely to become free labor to work on the institution's grounds. Few are actually released to the community.

**1935:** Social Security act is passed and signed. It provides income support to people with disabilities. It will be amended several times over the decades to extend additional assistance.

**1940s:** Fairview's population continues to grow with more than 1,235 residents and 189 attendants living in a dozen dormitory style cottages. Attendants ask for separate housing from the patients. During The Depression in the 1930's and the War in the 1940's, fiscal resources dry up and institutions have fewer staff with less training. Fairview becomes overcrowded.

The U.S. enters World War II and many attendants at public institutions are drafted, leaving a shortage of workers. Institutions address their worker shortage by employing conscientious objectors. Records of their observations raise public awareness of the conditions of public institutions.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, there is a reawakening of hope and possibility for persons with disabilities. Frustrated and angry over poor living conditions and the lack of community services, parents begin to organize and demand services for their children. The efforts of a few groups of parents, scattered across the United States, lead to a strong, national movement of parents.

**1942-1947:** 3000 conscientious objectors work in 62 state institutions. Many document conditions with words and images and make them public such as a 1946 article in *Life Magazine*. They found the National Mental Health Association in 1946.

**1943:** The concept of “normalization”, regular patterns and conditions of life in the community, for people with intellectual disabilities is first articulated by a Swedish government committee. The concept would be developed in

Scandinavia by Bengt Nirje and parent associations over the next decades and take hold in the United States by the early 1970's.

1949: United Cerebral Palsy Associations is founded.

1949: Over 5000 lobotomies are performed in the US. Egas Moniz the inventor of the lobotomy wins the Nobel Prize for medicine.

**1950s: The resident population at Fairview peaks at around 3,000. The Oregon State Hospital also houses 5,000 people. Pressure grows for new institutions. Institutions are organized like hospitals with residents living in “wards” or “nursing units”. The superintendents of the institutions are often physicians.**

1950: Parents across the nation meet to form the National Association of Parents and Friends of Mentally Retarded Children, renamed in 1952 the National Association for Retarded Children, and currently known as The Arc of the United States.

1954: The US Supreme Court rules in Brown v. Board of Education that “separate facilities are inherently unequal.” This principle influences later legislation for people with disabilities.

**1954: The Arc of Oregon forms to advocate for Oregonians with intellectual disabilities.**

**1958: The Arc of Benton County is founded to advocate for people with developmental disabilities in Benton County. They are early leaders in developing community-based services. The first residential, vocational, recreational, and educational programs for people with developmental disabilities in Benton County arise out of The Arc.**

**1959: Mid-Columbia Home in The Dalles is converted from a tuberculosis hospital to provide long-term care for older people with intellectual disabilities. It was renamed Columbia Park State Home in 1961, then Columbia Park Hospital and Training Center in 1965.**

**1960: The Arc of Benton County opens a school for children with developmental disabilities in a local church. The school operated until 1969 when House Bill 1217 allowed public schools to serve children without restrictions.**

**1961: Dammasch State Hospital opens.**

**1961: The Mental Health Division is created within the Board of Control.**

1963: President Kennedy calls for services to be provided in communities for people who are or might be institutionalized. Congress authorizes federal grants for community mental health centers. President Kennedy's sister Rosemary was diagnosed with a disability and given a lobotomy in 1941 at age 23, which left her incapacitated. She lived in an institution for people with developmental disabilities in Wisconsin for many years. Rosemary's sister Eunice was a founder of Special Olympics.

1964: The US Congress passes the Civil Rights Act. Though it initially did not extend protections to people with disabilities, it laid the framework for future civil rights legislation to include people with disabilities, most notably the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Hubert Humphrey tried unsuccessfully to include disability as a protected class to the Civil Rights Act in 1972.

1965: The Autism Society of America is founded by parents of children of autism who question the "expert" opinion that autism is caused by poor parenting.

**1965: Eastern Oregon Training Center begins serving people with developmental disabilities. In 1985, it is reorganized into two institutions, Eastern Oregon Psychiatric Center for people with mental illnesses and Eastern Oregon Training Center for people with developmental disabilities.**

**1965: A services coordinator model at the county level is envisioned in the state's comprehensive plan for services to people with "mental retardation".**

1965: The US Congress establishes the Medicare and Medicaid programs that provide health care coverage to many people with disabilities and later becomes a cornerstone for community-based alternatives to institutional care.

1966: President Johnson forms the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

**1967: The Oregon State Board of Eugenics becomes the State Board of Social Protection. It is abolished in 1983.**

1968: The US Congress passes the Fair Housing Act to prohibit discrimination in housing. People with disabilities are included in the act in 1988.

1968: First International Special Olympics Games are held in Chicago.

1969: Bengt Nirje from Sweden and Niels Bank-Mikkelsen from Denmark introduce the concept of “normalization” at a conference sponsored by the President’s Committee on Mental Retardation.

**1969: The Oregon Board of Control is abolished. Mental Health Division is placed under the Governor and then the Department of Human Resources.**

**1969: The Corvallis School District opens classrooms for children with developmental disabilities. This becomes the first non-institutional public service setting for people with developmental disabilities in Benton County.**

**1969: Bud Fredericks, doctoral student at the University of Oregon and parent of a three year old boy with Downs Syndrome, presents a paper to the Benton County Mental Health Clinic on the services coordinator model.**

**1969: Benton ARC Activity Center (later Bonney Enterprises then Cornerstone Associates) opens to serve people with developmental disabilities in the Benton County community.**

1970: President Nixon signs the Developmental Disabilities Services and Facilities Construction Amendments to the 1963 Mental Retardation Facilities and Community Health Centers Construction Act. This law authorizes state allotments for planning, services, and construction of facilities for people with developmental disabilities. It funds pilot projects and a state planning and advisory council (**Oregon Developmental Disabilities Council**).

1970: The Federal District Court rules in Wyatt v. Stickney that individuals have a constitutional right to receive services in the least restrictive environment.

**1971: In October, Benton and Lincoln County Mental Health Clinics initiate the first pilot project in Oregon of a services coordination model for people with developmental disabilities funded under the 1970 DD Services Act. It later becomes the Benton County Developmental Disabilities Program.**

**Barbara Sackett is hired as the lone staff person for both counties. She becomes the first program manager for Benton County and the first in the state of Oregon. She shares an office with the psychiatrist in Benton County Mental Health three days per week and has her office at a card table in the reception area of Lincoln County Mental Health two days per week.**

#### **Six Objectives of the Services Coordinator Pilot Project**

- 1. Identify resources and maintain a resource file.**
- 2. Identify individuals with developmental disabilities.**
- 3. Match individuals to needed services.**
- 4. Provide follow-up and follow-along services.**
- 5. Document the need for new services.**
- 6. Establish needed services.**

**1972: Housing for the Handicapped (now Home Life) forms in Corvallis.**

1972: Decisions by the Supreme Court and Federal District Court strike down laws excluding children with disabilities from public schools.

1972: Passage of Social Security Act Amendments creates the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program to ease the financial challenges of caring for an adult child with a disability.

**1973: State legislation gives authority for services such as case management, parent training, and work activity centers in the Community Mental Health Programs. Seven services coordinator positions are funded state-wide from state general funds. One position is funded for Benton and Lincoln Counties.**

**1973: Martha House opens in January as the first group home in Benton County. Ten women live in the home with house parents. Half the residents were from Fairview Training Center and half were from the community. Most of the early group homes had ten beds. It is run by house parents and has a skills trainer paid through a federal grant.**



**1973: Columbia Park Hospital and Training Center closes.**

1973: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act incorporates the concept of “reasonable accommodation” in its prohibition on discrimination against people with disabilities. Implementation is delayed until protests force action in 1977 when disability groups demonstrate at offices of the Department of Health Education and Welfare. The protest includes the longest ever sit-in at a federal building.

**1974: The first convention of People First is held in Salem, Oregon. People First becomes the largest organization in the US composed of and led by people with intellectual disabilities.**

**1974: Respite service begins in Benton County.**

1974: The American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities is set up as the first major cross-disability organization in the United States.

1974: President Nixon issues executive order affirming the nation’s goal of returning one-third of people in institutions back to the community. The term "developmental disability" is created to refer to "a disability attributable to mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or another neurological condition," and it is used for planning purposes and funding allocations.

1975: Federal Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act is passed requiring protection and advocacy programs as a condition to receive state grants, establishing the right to appropriate treatment and services, expanding definitions to include autism, and requiring plans for service delivery (Individualized Service Plans). **Oregon Advocacy Center later Disability Rights Oregon is founded.** The act was amended in 1978 to define developmental disabilities in terms of functional limitations and to prioritize four service areas (case management services, child development services, alternative community living services, and non-vocational social-developmental services). The act was amended again in 1984 to include employment as a priority area and promote achieving one’s maximum potential through increased independence, productivity, and integration.

1975: The Education for All Handicapped Children Act mandates “a free and appropriate public education” in the “least restrictive setting” for all eligible children with disabilities. As children are able to attend community schools,

the numbers of people in institutions begin to decline. Later amendments of the act are known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**1975: There are twenty-one services coordinators serving twenty-five counties. Benton and Lincoln Counties become two separate developmental disabilities programs.**

**1978: Barbara Sackett is hired to head the Case Management Program for the state of Oregon. Stephen Schuetz, PhD, becomes the second Benton County Developmental Disabilities Program Manager. There is a full-time coordinator and a half time staff person.**

1981: The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act authorizes the home and community-based waiver program that allows for Medicaid funding of in-home and community-based services as an alternative to institutional care.

1981-1984: The Reagan administration attempts to roll back provisions of the Rehabilitation Act and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. Attempts are abandoned in the face of an intensive grassroots lobbying campaign. Social Security benefits are terminated for hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities. In response, Congress passes legislation that allows individuals to continue to receive benefits during their appeals process.

**1982: Individualized Movement and Physical Activity for Children Today (IMPACT) is established by the Movement Studies in Disability Program of Oregon State University.**

**1985: The US Department of Justice finds major civil rights violations and life-threatening conditions at Fairview and files suit on behalf of the parents of residents and The Arc of Oregon.**

**1985: The Arc of Benton County becomes a provider of residential services, later to become Benco in 1997.**

**1985: Work Unlimited Inc. begins providing community-based employment services for people with developmental disabilities in Benton County.**

1985: The U.S. Supreme Court rules in City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Center that localities cannot use zoning laws to prohibit group homes for

people with developmental disabilities from opening in a residential area solely because its residents are disabled.

**1986: Medicaid cuts off funding for Fairview. The state expands community-based programs. Funding was restored in 1987 and cut off again in 1988.**

1986: The Employment Opportunities for Disabled Americans Act is passed, allowing recipients of Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance to retain benefits, particularly medical coverage, even after they obtain work. The act is intended to remove the disincentives that keep disabled people unemployed.

**1989: A consent decree of the US Department of Justice requires long-term plan which includes closing Fairview by 2000.**

**1989-1999: The state's Community Integration Program develops 200 homes for about 950 people with developmental disabilities. 84% of the homes are in the Willamette Valley.**

**1989: Oregon Community Support begins operation in Benton County. This was a model project funded by a federal grant to demonstrate that the people living at Fairview who were deemed too difficult to serve in the community could be served appropriately in the community. These services were transferred to Work Unlimited in 1997 and continue successfully to this day.**

1990: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) passes and is signed by President George H W Bush. This is a major civil rights victory for people with disabilities. It built upon the foundation of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and came to fruition with the advocacy of coalitions of advocates.

**1995: Dammasch State Hospital closes.**

**1997: The Oregon legislature passes legislation to close Fairview and invest in long-term disability services.**

**1997: Benco begins operation as an agency independent of The Arc of Benton County.**

**2000:** The last resident leaves Fairview Training Center and it closes.

**2000:** The Staley Agreement with the state of Oregon creates support service brokerages for adult with developmental disabilities.

**2001:** Bonney Enterprises, spun off from The Arc in 1978, and Open Door, founded by The Arc in the mid-1960's, merge to form Cornerstone Associates to provide vocational services.

**2002:** Governor John Kitzhaber apologizes for the forced sterilization of individuals residing in state institutions, mostly the Oregon State Hospital, under the eugenics policy between 1917 and 1983. He becomes only the second governor to apologize for state eugenics policies. He also acknowledges other abuses and mistreatment.

**2003:** Stephen Schuetz retires after twenty-five years of service. Jasper Smith becomes the third program manager for the Benton County Developmental Disabilities Program.

**2003:** The Learn to Work summer employment program begins in Corvallis.

**2004:** The Benton County Developmental Disabilities Program begins a mental health carve-out program where mental health services for people with developmental disabilities are offered and supervised within the DD Program.

**2005:** My Club begins as a social and recreational program.

**2007:** Life Skills program begins for adult continuing education.

**2009:** President Obama signs the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is the first human rights convention of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Its eight guiding principles are:

1. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
2. Non-discrimination
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
4. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity

5. Equality of opportunity
6. Accessibility
7. Equality between men and women
8. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities

**2009: The last resident leaves Eastern Oregon Training Center and it closes. Oregon no longer has any public or private institutions for people with developmental disabilities and does not send anyone to out-of-state institutions. Everyone with a developmental disability lives in the community.**

2010: The US Congress passes Rosa's law to replace references to "mental retardation" with "intellectual disability" in federal law.

**2011: The Benton County Developmental Disabilities Program celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**