

The Binnacle

Charting Your Own Course

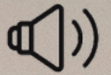


[Stories](#)

[Tips & Hacks](#)

[Resources](#)

The Binnacle is the case in which the ship's compass is kept. It allowed mariners to determine their direction even if clouds obscured their usual astronomical cues such as the North Star.



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Notes from the Publisher

Aldea LaParr



We are looking for contributors!

It's summer time again I hope that everybody has a wonderful summer. This issue is a mix and match of a couple different topics. We talked about how important it is to share your story and and some tips on how to share your story.

We are looking for more contributors as our magazine readership and leadership continues to grow.

Please consider sharing your story with us!

We want others to feel comfortable to contact us and let us know what topics or activities that you would like us to cover. We also want anyone who wants to share their story to contact us!

[Contact Us Here](#)

America's Dream

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*W*e just recently celebrated America's 250th year of our independence and it was a joyous occasion since we had forgotten all about the negativity that is happening in this world today.

*W*hat does it mean to be an American? Is there a definite answer to this? Maybe or maybe not. People have lots of different perspectives on what people believe about being an American, some even call it the American dream. For whatever reason you didn't achieve this dream, that doesn't mean it won't come. But nevertheless, we all have one thing in common and that is that we all dream. Sometimes you may feel like your dream is unreachable but don't get discouraged because the sky is the limit and it's up to you in order to achieve your American dream.

*W*e are so lucky because sometimes we complain and for whatever reason we didn't get our way. We must realize that we have this privilege to complain about our government because our armed forces made it possible for all of us to live the American dream. This dream is unique in the world. This dream is alive today because of the many sacrifices that our armed services had in the past.

*W*hether you fall on tough times or have great times. One thing is for sure, no matter where we fall on this spectrum, Americans have this in common and that is, tomorrow will be better than today. It isn't about gender, it isn't about income or what you wear, it's all about your American dream coming together.

*S*o don't get discouraged. Your dreams are yours to keep if you have doubt, throw it out. You are an American and you will get your way.

Live the American dream!

ALP-NC Launches StoryShare Workshop Series



This summer, ALP-NC graduated the first cohort of our new StoryShare Workshop series - a space where advocates develop and share their own personal stories about problems that matter to them. Built on ALP's advocacy story map tools and our familiar advocacy process example, the Sidewalk Story, the series meets over three workshop sessions and closes with Leaders sharing their finished advocacy stories with the full group.

True to ALP values, this first cohort was also an experiment in crafting access under real conditions. We worked with new producers, brand-new material, new goals, and new technology all at once - and, for the first time, we integrated ASL interpretation into our sessions. Each of these brought its own learning curve. Access isn't a finished project but something we build, adjust, and return to together, and this cohort taught us a great deal about doing that well.

Did we try things we don't want to ever try again? YES!

Did we demonstrate care, disability pride, and a commitment to mutual access throughout? YES!

Will we Rest, Review, and Return to the work as we're ready? YES!

The stories our Leaders shared in Graduation reflected the range of experiences in the room: from agency in the ordinary parts of daily life, to a school bus that stopped coming, to communicating through one's hands, to advocacy for young adults living with rare disease, to how a few words can open doors for kids across North Carolina. Different perspectives, different problems - and a shared belief that each personal story can move us toward change.

We're proud of this first StoryShare cohort and can't wait to welcome the graduates into our growing community of ALP-NC Alumni Leaders. And there's more to come: applications will open soon for the Fall 2026 cohort of ALP-NC.

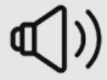
If you or someone you know is ready to build authentic advocacy skills, watch for applications to open at www.alp-nc.org - we'd love to welcome you to the team.



Technology and Self Advocacy



Aldea LaParr



As somebody with cerebral palsy unable to legibly write, computers have opened up my world. Over the years, I have found software to help me accomplish multiple tasks. Not only can I receive information from the internet, but I can use the internet to help me communicate. It also allows me to be creative.

When I started graphic design, I was limited to what software worked the best for me. I often had to use multiple software programs to accomplish one task. Technology is so different today.

In collaboration with Centered Resources, I will be teaching an online class. The class we'll explain all the uses of technology and how they can better help us tell our story.

COURSE OUTLINE

Knowledge

Understanding
Technology.

Learning

Accessing
Technology to
develop skills.

Discovery

Software programs
to help you develop
your story.

Expression

The Creation of Your
Self Advocacy Story



Making our world accessible



Michael & Wendy: The Road to Freedom

Click image to watch the video.

Artistic Tips and Hacks

By Philip Woodward



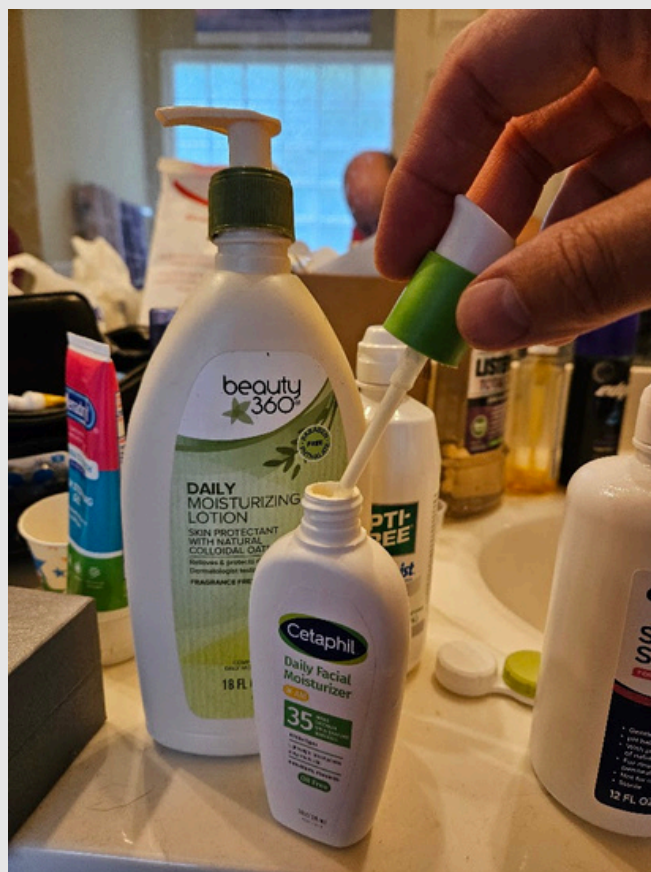
Anybody who knows me knows how much I love to collect sports cards. It's a lifelong hobby that I have not outgrown and do not plan to outgrow. In 2020, we all experienced a global pandemic, we were all home more often looking for ways to be creative and occupy our time. I pulled out some sports cards that I had cut up or glued pictures to and wanted to use my duplicates to create more of what is known as #CardArt. Thankfully, I had saved all of my duplicates instead of throwing them away. I had also saved a bunch of my kids' old National Geographic for Kids magazines and other magazines that provided great illustrations and images to cut out to glue onto sports cards. Sharing my #CardArt on social media made other people smile. I also created it as gifts for people, and I auctioned it off to raise money for fundraisers for non-profit organizations in need. As I experimented more and more, I started recycling other types of things such as clean food packaging. For example, I turned a Rice-A-Roni box into a Jerry "Rice-A-Roni" football #CardArt piece featuring Jerry Rice, the greatest wide receiver of all time, on it! In August 2023, after hearing about the tragic wildfires in Maui in Hawaii and wanting to help out in some way, I found a football card of Jerry Rice wearing a Pro Bowl jersey (the Pro Bowl used to occur in Hawaii), found a Dole pineapple can with a picture of a pineapple on it, cut the pineapple off the can wrapper, printed a picture of a surfboard, and created a 1990 Pro Set Jerry Rice Pro Bowl Pineapple Surfboard #CardArt card that I successfully auctioned off for \$50 on Twitter with the money going directly to an organization providing Maui wildfire relief. Saving a pineapple can helped me raise \$50 for a worthwhile cause!



Pictured are the raw materials that include a Dole pineapple tidbits can, a photo of a surfboard in Maui, and a 1990 Pro Set Pro Bowl Jerry Rice football card. Also pictured is the 1990 Pro Set Jerry Rice Pro Bowl Pineapple Surfboard #CardArt card.

Before throwing something away or even tossing it into the recycling bin, I consider whether the item might be useful. For example, plastic bags of all sizes are useful for me as a dog owner. I always need bags for picking up after my three dogs when walking them and when picking up after them in my backyard. The Amazon gift messages that come on little white squares of paper in Amazon packages are useful for creating grocery lists because one side is blank, and oftentimes half of the other side is blank. A colorful water bottle or drink bottle can make a lovely vase for flowers. And white socks that get holes in them work much better for wiping pollen off of the vinyl siding of my house than the water spraying from my hose and even my pressure washer sometimes!

Do you ever watch the TV show “Shark Tank?” On one episode, an innovative entrepreneur shared a lotion bottle spoon that can scoop extra lotion out of the bottle after it will no longer flow through the pump handle into your hand. I believe this entrepreneur said people discard lotion bottles with up to 25% of the lotion still in the bottle. I use a morning facial lotion to keep my face clean and not too oily, and I use the tube itself and a clean chopstick to scoop out lotion on the bottom that won’t flow through the pump handle. I had a chopstick sticking out of that lotion bottle for more than a month this spring. That means I got a whole additional month worth of lotion out of the bottle and saved money by not having to buy a new bottle so soon.



Pictured is a bottle of facial lotion with Philip pulling the pump handle out of it. The long tube or something similar such as a chopstick can help you get lotion out that will not flow through the tube and the pump handle.

I act the same way with food containers such as yogurt tubs. Much to my family's annoyance, I want to get every last little bit of yogurt out of the tub before I rinse it out and recycle it. My kids think scooping out 90% to 95% of the yogurt is good enough, but I won't stop until I have gotten close to 100% out of the tub. For a person with a disability on a fixed income, saving and eating every little bit of food can help. If this person can scoop out an extra half-serving or even a whole serving of yogurt before the tub is completely empty, it can give them some breakfast to eat before they need to buy more food.

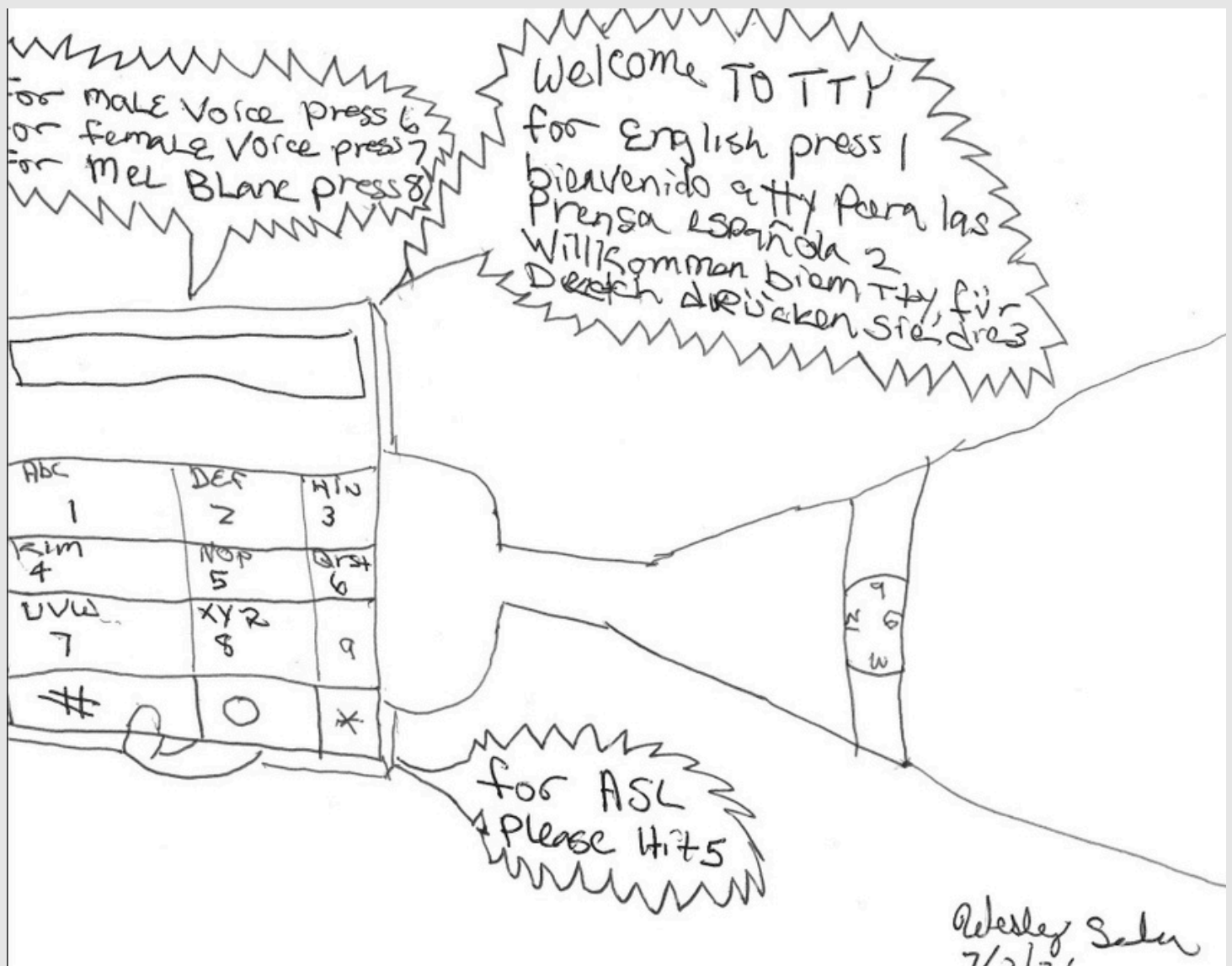
I hope you might find some of these tips and hacks useful. My mindset is that if I bought something, I want to get my money's worth or more than my money's worth. Too many Americans today throw away food that might still be perfectly safe to eat and various household products that might still be useful to themselves or another person. By extending the life of something, I am extending the distance my dollar goes. Don't we all want that? Please feel free to tell me what tips and hacks you have and what works for you! Thank you very much!

Philip Woodward is a Systems Change Manager for Community Living initiatives at the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD). He will help you see the artistic value in everything you look at!



Wesley's Take

Wesley Siler



Wesley is published!

There's something about the words inside my head, I have to get them out regardless of how long it takes or what I have to do to get them out. Its something I had thought about for a while if there was a pen, or a keyboard that didn't write with ink, something else would have to be required.

The thing that beats in all of us and is readily available. All at once infinite and finite. The pen was there as I saw it and picked it up. Though i wasn't sure how it was that I was able to think of that form.

The idea was as if I had found a form able to be taken, withdrawn and edged out of the body with as little or as much pain as I could choose. Blood was my medium, and I have a story to tell.

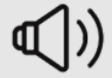


Check out
Wesley's book!



More Than One Room

Nessie Siler



I didn't know anything about supports of any kind when I first needed them. All I knew was that I was 25 years old and I wanted more from my life than just living in my bedroom in my parents' house. I knew I wanted to go to college and I wanted a job. I knew college cost money and I knew I didn't have that.

What I did have was a friend in our church choir who would listen to me when I would tell her my dreams. That's all they were at the time- dreams. One night during a phone call she just said, "On Thursday I'm taking you to register for classes at COA." COA was College of the Albemarle, our local community college. I protested that there was no way I would have the money to be able to attend. She said there were such things as grants- and we were going.

So we went. By the end of that afternoon, I had registered for my first two classes as a freshman and had my FAFSA filled out. I was so excited and so scared. I didn't even know how I was going to get to the building consistently, let alone do the work required to graduate. I barely knew how to turn on a computer. I had no driver's license, very little money, and way too much time on my hands. I may not have known how I could even start, but the alternative was to die of boredom and frustration at home. And I knew I could stay in school if I could just get there.

It turned out there were other adult students willing and able to put me in their cars so we could both get to class on time. And they didn't mind coming to my house to pick me up or drop me off.

For the times no one could pick me up to take me to classes, I learned to use the phone at home to call a local cab service and make my arrangements. Sometimes this meant going for a morning class and staying at school until the conclusion of another class in the evening, but it was worth it to me. I did my homework in the student lounge between classes and waited for my cab driver at night. I came to know most of the drivers by name and they were helpful.

Within a month I had 2 part time jobs and ways to get to them thanks to my teachers and the work-study program through the Pell grant. I had classes and homework and friends. I could finally see a future that included more than just one room. In spite of my disability, the one thing that I was sure was the reason for being so held back. I still had that too, and it made things difficult at times, I won't lie. To this day, it still does. But the disability came to matter less and less as the world opened up to me.

My point is to try. Even if it's scary, even if it's hard. Always try to go after what you want even if you don't know how everything is going to turn out. Take whatever supports are offered to you and ask how to get the others you need that may not be offered. Someone as you travel through life knows, if not, perhaps they can point you in the direction of the ones that do.



Find

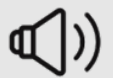
Ability360's Peer Mentoring Program The Impact of Peer Mentors



[Click here if the YouTube video does not start.](#)



Encouraging messages of love and support to share.
DO YOU HAVE A MESSAGE? Please share with us!



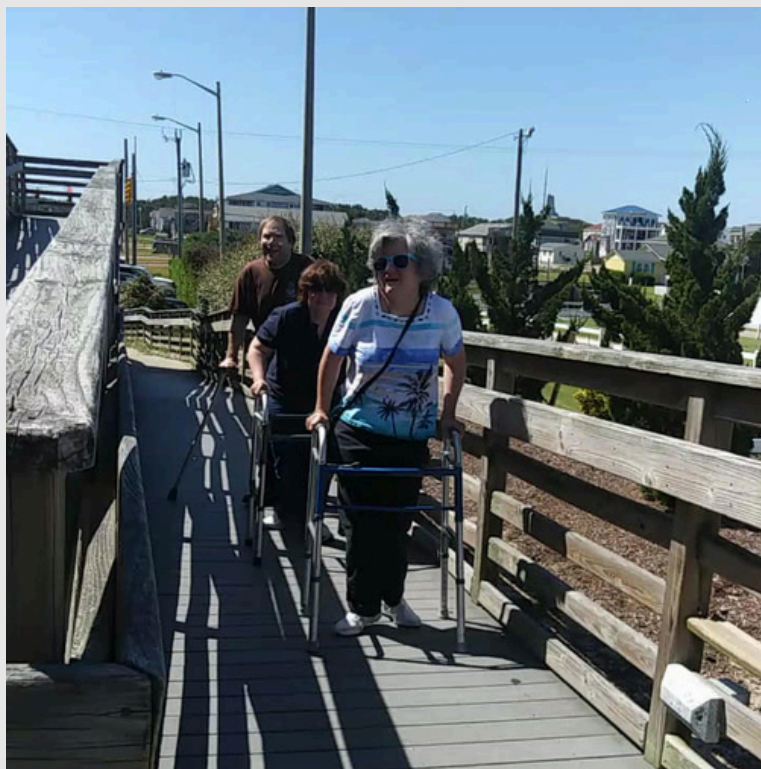
Stories

to look back on



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Issue: Summer 2021

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Take us to the beach!
Issue: Summer 2024

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