

## Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities

May 2019

| Joel Peden, Montana Independent Living Project   |   |
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| <p><b>This project has impacted my life because:</b></p>   | <p>Being invited to participate and share my expertise about inclusion is every advocate's dream scenario. Working with the Lewis and Clark Public Health Department and PureView as part of their Inclusive Workgroup has been a great experience. It is rewarding to see social change happening right before my eyes.</p>  |
| <p><b>The most influential policy, system, or environmental change of this project to me was:</b></p>  | <p>The biggest change to me was when the group would discuss a topic and show an awareness of how people with disabilities may be affected by the way something is currently being done. This is an example in my mind of a systems change since the health department is permanently integrating a focus on disability inclusion and changing the way they approach many aspects of doing business and day-to-day operations.</p>  |
| <p><b>As a result of this, I/we:</b><br/><i>(List how you have been impacted, influenced, affected – e.g. tell us something you can do now that you couldn't before, or what the change has helped to improve)</i></p> | <p>As an advocate, this process is a win for me. To be able to help to mold a new mindset in an organization related to disability has been uplifting to me. Sometimes you feel like all you do is fight for issues that should have been settled 30 years ago. As much as the changes in policy and procedures are great, it is the new disability awareness of a group of temporarily able-bodied people that means the most.</p> |
| <p><b>What was the emotional connection, self-efficacy, or "ah-ha" moment for this project?</b></p>  | <p>About five meetings in to this process, to see my role shift from the person who pointed out the issues in a discussion to hearing the group do that more and more, well, I literally just sat back and smiled.</p>  |

*Please note that testimonials may be edited for clarity by the NACDD Communications Department.*

(double click to edit) May 2019