



## News Release

### 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Disability Pride Parade Downtown Chicago, July 23, 2011

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#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHICAGO – The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Disability Pride is set for Saturday, July 23, in downtown Chicago. An estimated 5,000 people, floats, and vehicles representing a wide variety of disability and other organizations will march and roll along Dearborn Street from the Harold Washington Library to Daley Plaza – all in celebration of the theme: **Disability Pride is Contagious! Catch the Pride.** (See accompanying fact sheet.)

The parade is a grass-roots effort, organized completely by people with disabilities. Now in its eighth year, the Disability Pride Parade continues to gain more support and attention each year, garnering sponsorship from such organizations as University of Illinois at Chicago; SEIU Healthcare IL/IN; and Equip for Equality, the state’s advocacy and protection agency.

The Disability Pride Parade is an annual event that celebrates and strengthens the pride, power, and unity of people with disabilities, their families, and allies, and serves to generate national visibility for the disability community.

This year’s Grand Marshal is Disability Activist and Feminist Catherine Odette.

*Disability Pride Parade Planning Committee • 40 E. Chicago Avenue, Suite 231. • Chicago, IL 60611`  
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“Catherine reflects this year’s theme very well,” says Janice Stashwick, one of the parade organizers. “Catherine was one of the organizers of the Disability Pride March in Boston in 1990. That was the first time the words disability and pride were said together.

“Many people believe that disability is contagious,” continues Stashwick. “But we in the disability community know that is not true. But disability PRIDE can be contagious. We caught in from the Boston march and other communities have caught it from us.”

Inspired by efforts in Chicago, there are now Disability Pride Parades in such varied places as Atlanta, Houston, Silicon Valley, Norway, the UK and Korea.

Odette is the director of the Disabled Womyn’s Educational Project. She is completing work on a book tentatively entitled *Speed Bump*. The book explores their experiences of abuse in disability-related schools/institutions, which purported to help with physical and/or mental health disabilities. Odette also was editor of the international newsletter “Dykes, Disability, & Stuff,” and established “Able Images,” a program that uses multimedia approaches to help non-disabled people understand the power, grace, and normality of life with a disability.

**People must register to march in the Disability Pride Parade by July 1. They can also call the parade’s toll-free number, 1-866-260-5812, for assistance.**

The mission of the Disability Pride Parade is: “to change the way people think about and define disability; to break down and end the internalized shame among people with disabilities; and to promote the belief in society that disability is a natural and beautiful part of human diversity in which people living with disabilities can take pride.”

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