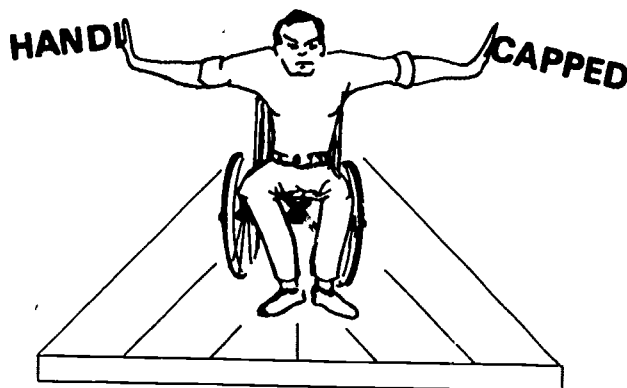


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S.O. F.E.D. U.P.

Student Organization For Every Disability United for Progress



HANDBOOK FOR THE DISABLED STUDENTS OF BROOKLYN COLLEGE C.U.N.Y.

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PREFACE

The essence of this short discourse is the theme of our entire program at Brooklyn College: It is the necessity for all to form a coalition of disabled and non-disabled individuals, in a united effort for activism, in order to secure the inalienable rights that are essential for the disabled to function as independently as possible.

There have been isolated accomplishments and achievements across this nation, on the part of brave and persistent individuals and progressive and highly committed organizations, that are praised and set up as models of inspiration for the disabled, to work harder, achieve more, and strive to surmount above average obstacles in pursuing their goals. They have had their affect upon us. They have succeeded in their efforts. They have fulfilled their purposes. They have influenced us to become better motivated, better trained, better educated, and because of this, better people.

But what happens to us now that we have worked to become this way? When we attempt to seek higher education, we are, forced to select a school according to its architectural accessibility, rather than if its degree program, and academic accreditation meet the standards of our individual professional and educational goals, or achievement caliber. When we go to look for a job, to put what we have been educated and trained for into operation, are we judged for the job on an equal basis as our non-disabled peers? When we do get a job, can we support ourselves, or our families, on the salary we earn after the exorbitant expenses for transportation to and from work are deducted from our paychecks (since we cannot use what is publicly provided for all)? When we can support ourselves comfortably in a nice apartment, are we able to live where we want, if we can't get through a door that is not wide enough to enter the building or get into the bathroom?

What then happens to our motivation? Are we to be teased by lucrative programs and independent efforts that are dangled in front of us and give us the incentive to work harder and to try to build a better life for ourselves, only to find, blocking our way, what appears to be insurmountable obstacles that are created by the apathy of bureaucratic administrators and the selfish unconcern of our own people, who feel they have made it and do not concern themselves with the problems of their fellow men?

The reason I am presenting these rhetorical questions, is to make you realize that individual, or isolated accomplishments are not truly complete if the overall society and structure are not affected by it, and -till remain apathetic to the needs of the masses.

The policy of inspiration must now be replaced by a policy of *activism*. We must expand and fulfill our rehabilitation methodology to include a concern as to what happens to the disabled person after he is trained or motivated to the specific standards of a program where success is based solely on his securing remunerative employment.

We must make the hierarchy of education aware of the necessity to abandon the psychology that forces an institutionalized alienation of disabled individuals into isolated specific programs and classes for the *handicapped* only, and instead, make all schools and colleges architecturally accessible and bureaucratically non-inhibitive for the *disabled* so that they, and the non-disabled can interact with each other.

The disabled must have the same opportunity to attend any college of their choice as the non-disabled. They should not have to compromise their professional and educational goals because architectural barriers prevent them from gaining access to the school of their choice.

We must end the blatant discrimination that employers and administrators have for the disabled, by forcing Federal, State and Municipal intervention and legislation to protect our rights. And equally important and necessary, we must educate them to the fact that the disabled are capable of many qualities that will outweigh their physical limitations, so that they, as employers, will be able to judge us as prospective employees, free from the bigotry of the social stigmas attached to the disabled, which are not valid or fair.

We must make the individual and the independent organizations for the physically disabled, aware of the necessity to join together as an activist nationally collated force united in their efforts to bring down the walls of apathy, oppression, and discrimination.

We must make the disabled individual aware of the fact that only he, as a single entity of such a force, is the kinetic energy responsible for giving it the power to work. And, I say "*Disabled Individual*", rather than *Handicapped* because handicapped is the terminology favored by those who, through their ameliorative efforts and tedious apathy, create or strengthen those, *until now*, insurmountable walls that are the obstacles and barriers responsible for handicapping us. Until now, I say, because we are tired of these walls being taken apart by the tedious brick by brick process as practiced by those, who can do no more, but only dole out to us concessions and conciliations in the name of charity and ameliorative programs to placate their own consciences.

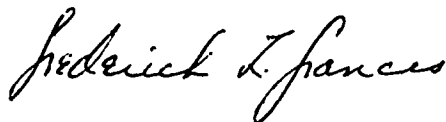
The lack of ramps, elevators and lavatory facilities that are accessible and properly equipped, presents insurmountable barriers to the physically disabled. We, the members of S.O. F.E.D. U.P. have succeeded at Brooklyn College in

eliminating these inhibiting factors that deny the physically disabled the freedoms of independent performance in an atmosphere conducive to learning and understanding. However, what we have accomplished is but a foundation for what is to follow, as determined only by you, yourselves. It is your responsibility, as well as mine, to add to what we have begun for you, by utilizing what experiences and knowledge you gain at Brooklyn College, and actively adapt it to the overall community. Until all facilities, be they public, private, university, business or housing, are completely accessible to the disabled, society is guilty of handicapping us in our efforts to achieve our rights. Until we, the disabled, begin to become *future*, as well as *now* oriented, in our thinking, we will continue to be as much a handicapping factor ourselves, as the intolerance and apathy of our institutions. The key for success, status, and recognition in our society is education. Therefore, we as students, who are physically disabled, must be realistic about our situation when choosing a college. Of course, until universal renovation is a reality, we must choose a college that is physically accessible to us—but equally as important and critical is the vital necessity for us to choose a highly accredited institution that will compliment our own academic qualifications and goals, so that the coupling of these two variables will afford us the maximum credentials possible for graduate school acceptance and professional placement.

This is essentially what we are offering you at Brooklyn College—an investment in your future.

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Founder, and First
President of
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