



Partners in Auxiliary Diversity

PAD Bulletin

"Moving Beyond Simple Tolerance"

Promoting an inclusive atmosphere of acceptance and respect and creating an environment, which fosters an appreciation of the values, skills, and abilities of each individual member.

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From Disability to Opportunity

Our focus in this edition of the PAD Bulletin is to inform you about some of the unique challenges faced by our colleagues with disabilities and their great contributions to the USCG Auxiliary. Additionally, we hope to inspire everyone to seek to learn more about and support each other as we all work to serve the Coast Guard and our great nation.

BRUCE MILLER **A Portrait of Determination**

Anyone that knows Commodore Bruce Miller will tell you that he is passionate about two things in the Auxiliary: the first is communication; the second, bringing people together. Bruce is a shining example at the forefront of those mission critical efforts as the Immediate Past Deputy National Commodore - Information Technology and Planning. Not one to let anything impede him from accomplishing his goals, Commodore Miller embodies the "can do" spirit that is the core of the Auxiliary and the entire Coast Guard team.

Early in his life Commodore Miller was diagnosed with polio and walked with the aid of crutches until 1998 when a fall, that would have threatened the mobility of many, served merely as an obstacle to be swiftly overcome. Rather than allow loss of mobility to limit his abilities he instead found ways to enhance the Auxiliary by pioneering better methods of communication that would allow people with all abilities to contribute.



Commodore Bruce Miller – Senior Advisor/Process Improvement

Further demonstrating his knack for conquering perceived barriers Commodore Miller changed insights while training for his Coxswain certification. Demonstrating

that he could safely and proficiently perform all of the assigned duties he quickly dispelled any doubts. “People have an assumption on what you can’t do. I was fortunate to find people that asked instead, how will you do this?” he remarked. He went on to say that all he did was adapt to the mission and equipment just as all crew members must ultimately do and also fully recognized limitations that would put him or his crew at risk. COMO Miller is firm in his belief that all members of the Auxiliary have a purpose, and that the purpose must be embraced. His message to members with disabilities is to look at all options for getting involved in Auxiliary functions.

Not all activities are for all people but with some assistance from leadership, many valuable functions are adaptable to people with disabilities. He is crafting solutions that will provide tools familiar to those younger members we are actively recruiting in his role as Senior NACO Advisor - Process Improvement. At the same time he does not want to disenfranchise those who are not as comfortable with the wide range of electronic tools that have become a way of life for social and professional interaction.

His enthusiasm regarding inclusiveness is borne out of the idea that diversity results in shared greatness that moves the organization forward. “All members have ideas. As a leader, all I do is connect people together. It is those relationships we craft among each other that makes every one of the precious volunteer hours we give more effective for the organization and more rewarding to the member.”

Alexander Urciuoli: Ops Normal **By Tracy Schultz, BC-DPA**

Alexander Urciuoli, a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla in Monterey, CA, is not one to take things for granted. Alex was born with cerebral palsy and has had to walk with the aid of crutches his entire life. Urciuoli especially likes the safety and prevention aspects of the Coast Guard. “Whether it is Boating Safety classes for the public, beach cleanups, or answering distress calls, the first mission is saving lives. I never get tired of being a part of that, and serving my country at the same time.” says Urciuoli. Auxiliarist Alexander Urciuoli is a fine example of the diversity to be found in the Coast Guard and is a qualified candidate to be a Diversity Champion. His own words describe the opportunities that exist in the Coast Guard and Auxiliary: “If you want to serve, you can serve. Find out what you can do, and do it. Don’t allow your disability to identify you.”



Alexander Urciuoli augmenting in the communications center at U.S. Coast Guard Station Monterey.

USING YOUR ABILITIES TO CONQUER YOUR DISABILITY

By Christopher Ware, BC-DAW

In July 1997, at the age of 25, everything was going great in my life. I had bought a house in 1995 and had two great jobs with State Farm Insurance and the police department. Who would have dreamed that I would suffer a severe stroke while directing traffic at a car accident in Bloomington, IL on my way home from work? There I lay in a hospital bed where I couldn't speak and was completely paralyzed on the right side of my body (from head to toe). My doctor rated the stroke a 9.5 on a 10 point scale and was calling around to move me to a nursing home for the rest of my life. I told the doctor I wasn't going to a nursing home and was going to walk out of that hospital. Through hard work with occupational, physical and speech therapists, I did walk out of that hospital after a month and returned to work three months later.



Branch Chief Christopher Ware on the bridge of the USCGC Makinaw

Seventeen years after the stroke living life with a disability still brings its challenges. I am still partially paralyzed in my right hand and arm, walk with a limp in my right leg, and have learned to speak again. I left the

police department in 2000 due to residual effects from the stroke.

In 2002 while visiting Washington D.C., my life was changed forever by a Coast Guard Auxiliarist. I attended a service fair featuring all departments of the United States government as well as all five branches of the Armed Forces in the Mall Area of DC. I went through all the information booths and when I came upon the Coast Guard Auxiliary booth, I was invited to join. I was thrilled with being asked, but quickly replied that I couldn't because I have a disability. The Auxiliarist explained that the Auxiliary was the civilian volunteer arm of the Coast Guard and that people with disabilities were welcomed. I joined up!

In time I discovered that there are many participation opportunities for people with disabilities, but you need to know what your physical limitations are and be willing to make others around you aware of what you can and cannot do.

The Coast Guard and Coast Guard Auxiliary have so many missions you can participate in and there is something for everyone. I am honored to have served in a wide range of positions and missions and I am now honored to serve as a member of the Diversity team.

Opportunity + Disability + Diversity = Assignability

By Gerard Williams BA-DADA

In the Auxiliary, there are many yet unfulfilled opportunities to add value to Team Coast Guard by identifying and smartly employing people who possess skills needed to meet Coast Guard readiness gaps. I witnessed many smart employment

examples of diversity at work during my 26 year active duty Coast Guard career. As a Station Commanding Officer, Group Operations Officer, Atlantic Area/Fifth District Command Center SAR Controller, and a Sector Response Department Head, I had many opportunities to leverage the unique talents of a diverse workforce to achieve mission success. Luckily, I was always able to reach out to the Coast Guard Auxiliary and receive outstanding support and advice from people who had unique skills.

I was in command of a Coast Guard Station during 9/11. The months that followed were full of positive examples of the Auxiliary stepping forward and providing critical support that allowed active duty and reserve members to get underway to guard the nation's waterways. Auxiliary member skill sets were recorded in a national database and we used that database to solicit specific skill set support from our auxiliary members - and they performed in a superior manner! That database is probably still around and has been augmented by more recent computer technology. We should scan those databases and ask people to help fill readiness gaps based on their skills. Unfortunately, one area that is often overlooked when we build personnel rosters is how to best employ people with disabilities.

We need only look to the National Incident Management System organizational framework to see many opportunities for people with disabilities to add their vast talents to mission success. For example, the ICS Logistics Section provides us with many positions that can be filled by people with disabilities. The Documentation Unit comes to mind as one such opportunity point where a more diverse work force can contribute by



Gerard Williams, BA-DADA and Commander, USCG (retired)

completing sedentary administrative type functions.

Leveraging diversity creates more comprehensive plans. Why don't we solicit more input and advice from people with disabilities as we develop our incident action plans (IAPs)? When I was a Response Department Head we had to draft an IAP for a mass casualty incident response based on the scenario of a sinking gambling vessel. That gambling vessel often carried over 300 people and many of them were elderly and disabled to include those using wheel chairs and walkers. We would have been crazy not to solicit plan design input from disabled members of our Team to help us identify and mitigate mission risk concerning the rescue of disabled persons from a sinking vessel, or worse from the water (PIW).

How else can we empower our shipmates with disabilities? I have employed people with disabilities to conduct shore-side SAR density patrols and weather reporting functions. They teamed with other members to chart boater density in my SAR "hot spots" and reported information to my Officers of the Day so we could better manage our small boat patrols. They subsequently worked a few SAR cases as defacto on-scene coordinators because they were there when boaters got into trouble. How rewarding was that for them? Answer... hugely rewarding!

The sky is no limit to diversity. I remember hearing of disabled Auxiliary air observers working patrols and SAR cases, and training other air observers.

Additionally, we should warmly embrace our returning disabled veterans who have and still want to serve with pride. We should help them to find places within the Auxiliary where they can contribute. One way to do this is to invite them to observe our team at work across the mission sets, and to then ask them to identify what they think they could add to our diverse talent pool. Seeking information and knowledge from others is a tenant of diversity. Let's put diversity into action by asking others what they see as opportunities in our organization, and then let's work smartly to make those opportunities possible for all.

Charting A Course For Others

By Ordice Gallups and Tyrone Keys, BC-DAD

When Ordice Gallups joined the Auxiliary in 2000 he knew exactly where and for whom he wanted to work. While participating in an ICS course in Baltimore he told then LCDR Rocky McNair "I'm going to work for you some day." Little did Gallups know that that statement would help

propel him to the position that he currently holds at headquarters as one of the leading ICS team members. He cites that, "all things ICS are my love," and that he chose this position because of the condition he suffers from known as Ankylosing Spondylitis. This condition is a type of arthritis that affects the bones causing joints to become swollen and inflamed. Over time, the spinal bones fuse making forward vision difficult.



Auxiliarist Ordice Gallups

Gallups completed three AUXOP courses in his first year. He also suffered a heart attack, but even that could not deter him from what he knew he wanted to do. He credits his Auxiliary mentor and wife Vivian as his two great supports over the years. "This is just the way I am," Ordice says with a laugh, "I have always been the type to look for a need or opportunity wherever I am and see if I can fill it. I just don't take no for an answer."

Gallups sees the opportunity for new members with disabilities to include positions in sector offices, DIRAUX appointments and even the office in their home." With this mindset Ordice is a

steadfast supporter of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and works to encourage others to join in where their individual qualifications are best suited. He jokes that his doctor wanted to see his timesheets to ensure he was not exceeding his limits; clearly Ordice's limits are bounded only by his enthusiasm.

Can You Hear Me Now? The Auxiliary And Me.

“Being born with a disability has never stopped me from doing anything,” says Nicky K.D. Chaleunphone or “Nick” as he is known, “nor have I seen it as a barrier or hindrance to me.”

Nick was born deaf in one ear and with an intersex/DSD condition. “I feel I am still able to have a normal life and enjoy doing my part for my country. I am doing my part to serve my country and to prove that disabled people can serve their country and contribute to the Nation.”

Nick has always faced and overcome many challenges in his personal life. “When I was growing up, I was able to blaze my own trail. I was never one to fit in with the crowd and I was unique in my own way. Never once did I think about giving up or giving in to my disability.”

Nick has played an active role in athletics and community service; he participated in high school sports, running track & field and cross-country. He later became a firefighter/EMT which, while beset with challenges, he is proud to serve in spite of his disabilities.

Nick's involvement with the Auxiliary started when his brother was serving on active duty in the U.S. Coast Guard onboard

the Coast Guard Cutter Seneca. After a tour, Nick decided to become involved with the U.S. Coast Guard. “I knew I would never meet the physical and medical requirements for active duty or the reserves, but when my brother explained that the Coast Guard had an Auxiliary side, I contacted the local Flotilla right away.”

Nick's current goals are to work on qualifications in PA, VE and Marine Safety. Nick is a student at Eastern Connecticut State University majoring in Biology. He aspires to become a Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner.



Auxiliarist Chaleunphone while augmenting at USCG Sector Long Island Sound.

“What I try to tell people is that being disabled I can do all the things that normal people can do. I may be one of the few known deaf disabled people in the Coast Guard Auxiliary. I am proving to people that those who are disabled can serve their country and I serve as an example that the Coast Guard Auxiliary is open to diverse people including those with disabilities.”

My life through Auxiliary vision is 20/20

Toby Wilson 85-16-06

Since 1996 I've worked as a TV Artist and Animator for Educational Television Services at Oklahoma State now the Institute for Teaching & Learning Excellence. I produce graphics for television, animations, illustration, multimedia, web, print and interactive graphics in both 2D and 3D.

While working there in 1999 we did some video work for the Auxiliary where I met LCDR Barry Fox, USCG, who told me about the Auxiliary. He explained what I could do to serve my community and country and I jumped at the chance to join. In my years as a member I have had the opportunity to work on projects at the National, Division and Flotilla levels.

I became a member of the Auxiliary in 1999 and have been fairly active. I have worked around a fairly severe visual impairment. I have several visual problems including poor depth perception, and I am basically blind on my left side and, for most of my life, I have been extremely myopic. My vision problems stem from a premature birth. I had multiple operations on both eyes repair the muscles.

My flotilla is in Oklahoma City and I live in Stillwater, about 65 miles away, so attending meetings is difficult. I must rely on rides in order to attend. In the past year I have served as our FSO-SR and in the coming year I will serve as both Secretary and IS officer. Recently I have attended our Flotilla meeting via Skype and conference calls.

As for the future I hope to learn navigation and radio communications. I like the fact that I can help in so many areas and there is always something new and challenging to explore.

Coming next edition we'll showcase the contribution women have had throughout Team Coast Guard including in the Auxiliary, on Active Duty and at the Coast Guard Academy.



DIVERSITY FACEBOOK PAGE LINK:

<https://www.facebook.com/CGAUXDiversity>

DIVERSITY WEB SITE (WEBSITE) LINK:

<http://www.uscgaux.info/content.php?unit=d-dept>

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