



Commissioner Nick Fish
City of Portland

December 12, 2012

Steve Lowenstein Trust Award *(15 min)*

Introduction by: Commissioner Nick Fish

Summary:

This is the twenty-first annual Steve Lowenstein Trust Award. The award was created to recognize an individual who is making an extraordinary personal effort and sacrifice to improve the quality of life for distressed and vulnerable populations in the City of Portland.

Presented by:

- Michelle Harper, Steve Lowenstein Board Chair

Invited Testimony:

- Bill West – Award Recipient

NOMINATION FOR THE STEVE LOWENSTEIN TRUST AWARD 2012

November 6, 2012

Nominee: Bill West
619 SW 11th Ave, #106
Portland, Oregon 97205
503-223-7279

1. Bill has spent many years providing case management services to individuals who primarily experience cognitive disabilities but have fallen through the cracks of the system. These are some of the most vulnerable persons in the community. He is the only person in Multnomah and Clackamas Counties doing this kind of work for this population. Bill is well-known in the disability community and individuals are referred to him from numerous sources. He has provided these services at no charge for over 30 years.

He has helped hundreds, if not thousands, of persons with disabilities find housing, food, counseling or legal services, things that they are not able to access themselves because of their own disabilities and because of the opaqueness of the system. Many of his clients have behavioral issues which are affecting their ability to live successfully in the community; without Bill's assistance, they would likely be institutionalized.

While he was providing these services, he advocated for individuals living in the now closed institution for the mentally retarded, Fairview Training Center. He helped to create a civil rights organization of persons with intellectual disabilities, People First of Oregon. That organization taught the residents of Fairview how to approach the administration to advocate for their rights. This movement spread across the county and is now an international movement. Bill also worked as a civil rights advocate at Fairview sitting through hearings, admissions, and discharges when behavioral issues and individual civil rights were in question.

Another important aspect of his work has been training police officers and agencies to interact with persons with these disabilities in humane ways. He has

worked tirelessly, and mostly on his own time, to lobby government agencies to make these changes. His efforts likely saved lives and prevented injuries.

2. Due to severe funding cuts of his employer, ARC of Multnomah and Clackamas, Bill has been working only part-time and as a consequence has lost his health insurance. Much of his work is done on his own time.

3. I have known Bill for more than 15 years when I was in private practice representing people who had been victimized by police officers who did not appreciate their cognitive problems. I had been looking for someone who could help me understand how police officers could be trained how to react humanely; numerous persons referred me to Bill as someone who could help. I have seen his compassion and dedication, facing and dealing with obstacles that are formidable. I would not like to see this important asset lost to the community. He is the consummate social conscience for the world of developmental and intellectual disabilities.

References:

Janet Straw 503-282-4604

Charlotte Duncan 503-884-5879

Spencer M. Neal
Oregon Law Center
921 SW Washington #516
Portland, Oregon 97205
503-473-8325
mneal@oregonlawcenter.org

Recognize Bill West recipient of the 2012 Steve Lowenstein Trust Award
(Presentation introduced by Commissioner Fish)

DEC 12 2012

PLACED ON FILE

DEC 07 2012

Filed _____

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
Auditor of the City of Portland

By  _____

COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:		
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz		
2. Fish		
3. Saltzman		
4. Leonard		
Adams		