

Please check which category you are nominating this person for:

	Advocacy	An individual or organization that has exhibited outstanding advocacy efforts on behalf of people with disabilities in the City of Portland
	Community Inclusiveness	An individual, organization, or program that has made a significant effort to include people with disabilities in the community in the City of Portland
	Lifetime Achievement	An individual that has spent a significant portion of their life working to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of people with disabilities in the City of Portland
X	Transportation	An individual or organization that has worked to improve the accessibility of the City of Portland in regard to transportation issues
	Youth Achievement	An individual under the age of 25 either with a disability or who has contributed to the disability community in a way that promotes inclusivity and awareness in the City of Portland

Name of Nominee: Amy Sharer Phone: (503) 418-1773 (work) / (503) 434-5407 (home)

Address: 3200 NE Lone Oak Road, McMinnville, OR 97128 Email: sharera@ohsu.edu

Name of Nominator: Denise Spielman Phone: _____

Email of Nominator: _____

In one page or less, please tell us why this individual, organization or program should be honored with the 2009 "Making a Difference" in disability award in the category for which you are nominating them.

Some ideas of things to share could include:

- How has the nominee worked to advocate for the disability community?
- What impact or observable change has occurred due to their efforts?
- An example or story that highlights why the nominee should be honored.

Amy is a young college student with disabilities who daily commutes on Tri-Met buses 2 hours each way from McMinnville to Portland for her job as a student research assistant at the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at OHSU. Since Amy uses a service dog, she experiences daily encounters with bus riders and some bus drivers who don't understand the need for service animals, nor how to behave around them. This is a problem specific to service animal teams, and especially when the two-legged member of the team has multiple disabilities, but is not blind.

Amy has taken it upon herself to educate both riders and drivers about service animals. She developed a brochure featuring Tux, her service dog, explaining what service animals are, why they may be needed, and how to behave around them. Amy (actually Tux's backpack) carries these brochures - especially geared for children - everywhere, and uses them when people want to pet her service animal. Depending on the day and the circumstances, she may let others pet Tux, who is a lovable black-and-white crossbreed. The more she rides buses, the more the regular riders understand service animals, their need to tuck themselves under a bus seat, as well as the services they perform for Amy.

Amy now has all her regular drivers "trained" to let her know when there is another team on board and where that team is located. In fact, Amy and Tux are both so likeable and easy to approach that after an encounter with "Amyntux," both riders and drivers have the information they need to educate others. All it takes is information for others to understand the needs of a service team, and Amy, being very adventurous, will set out to find a location, map out appropriate buses, and spend hours going to new places so that she can develop a better knowledge of the Portland area. All along those trips, she is educating the public AND the Tri-Met drivers. Once they meet Amyntux, they see the world of disability differently.

Perhaps some of the best outcomes Amy has had in educating the transit-riding public is to have people ask her to come talk to groups about her team and ask to take extra brochures for others. The drivers have asked her questions about service animals, and Amy knows her legal rights (both state and federal), so she can explain with authority how to behave, what reasonable behavior is expected of service animals, etc. Knowing that the first seat behind the area reserved for people with disabilities was her favorite, but knowing it was a tight squeeze for Tux, one driver actually had the bus seat adjusted so that Tux would fit more easily. Now that's Making a Difference!!!!