

Building past survival

Towards Disability Justice

S. Tuttle, University of Washington, Seattle

Get comfortable

(What does that mean?)

- Check in with your body and your brain - what do you need to be present for this talk?
- Stretch. Change position. Lay on the floor.
- Find something for your hands - knitting? A fidget?
- Take notes. Or don't.
- Stim.
- Turn off video.
- Come back to the recording if need be.

Roadmap



- **Words, and why they matter**
- **A little history**
- **A little context**
- **Disability and Astro/physics**



**Lydia X.Z.
Brown**



Keah Brown



Alice Wong



**Wanda Diaz
Merced**

**Leah Lakshmi
Piepzna-
Samarasinha**



Being disabled in the U.S.

- According to the US census bureau people with severe disabilities working full time earn approximately \$1,000.00 less per month than non-disabled workers.
- 54 million Americans have a disability.
- 13.3 million people with disabilities age 16-64 have experienced difficulty finding employment because of their disability.
- In 2008, only 13% of people age 25 or older had a bachelor's degree or higher.
- In 2010 the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) reported that 25,165 charges of disability discrimination were filed.
- 30 to 50 percent of all people killed by law enforcement officers are disabled (Ruderman Family Foundation Report)
- Almost a quarter of Black Americans are disabled. (2010 US Census)

Why disability justice?

RIGHTS:

The collection of entitlements which a person may have and which are protected by the government and the courts.

ACCESS:

To be able to use something, participating in something.

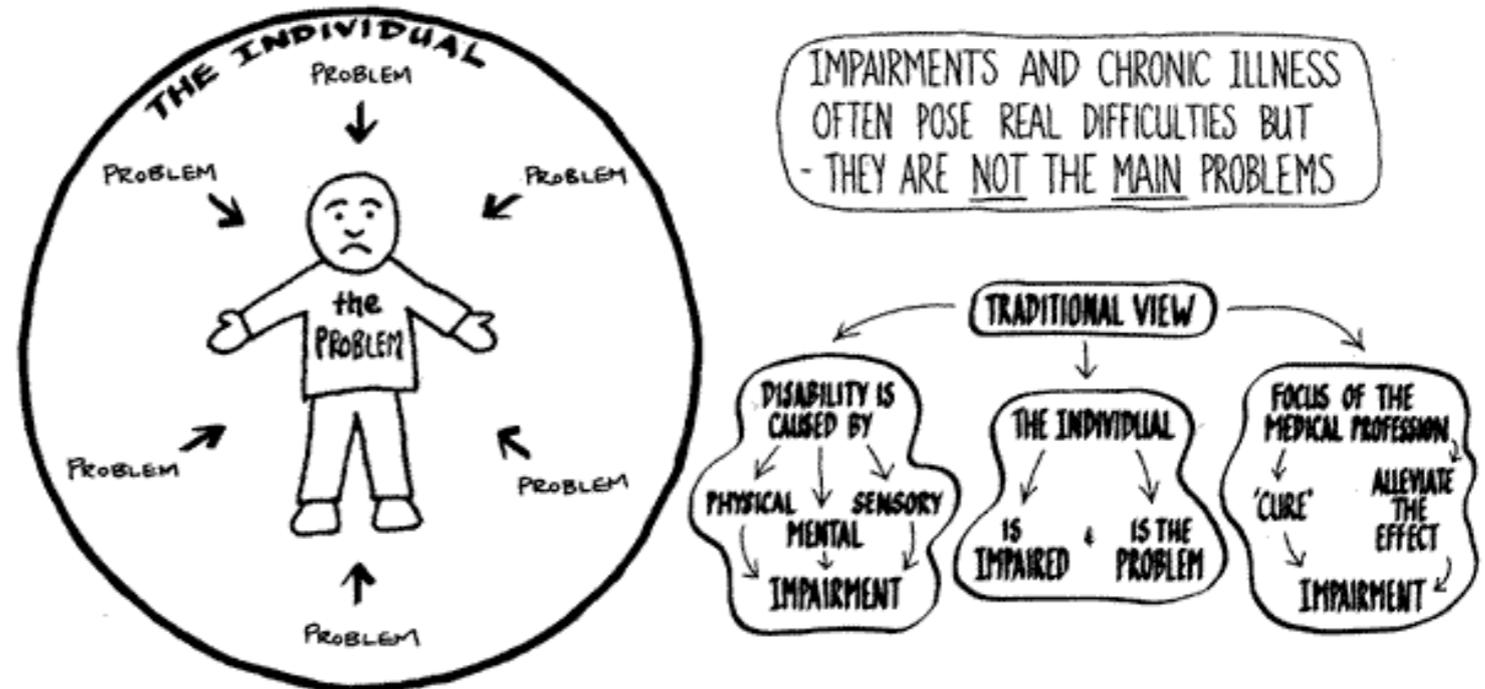
JUSTICE:

Moral rightness. Fairness. To each their due.

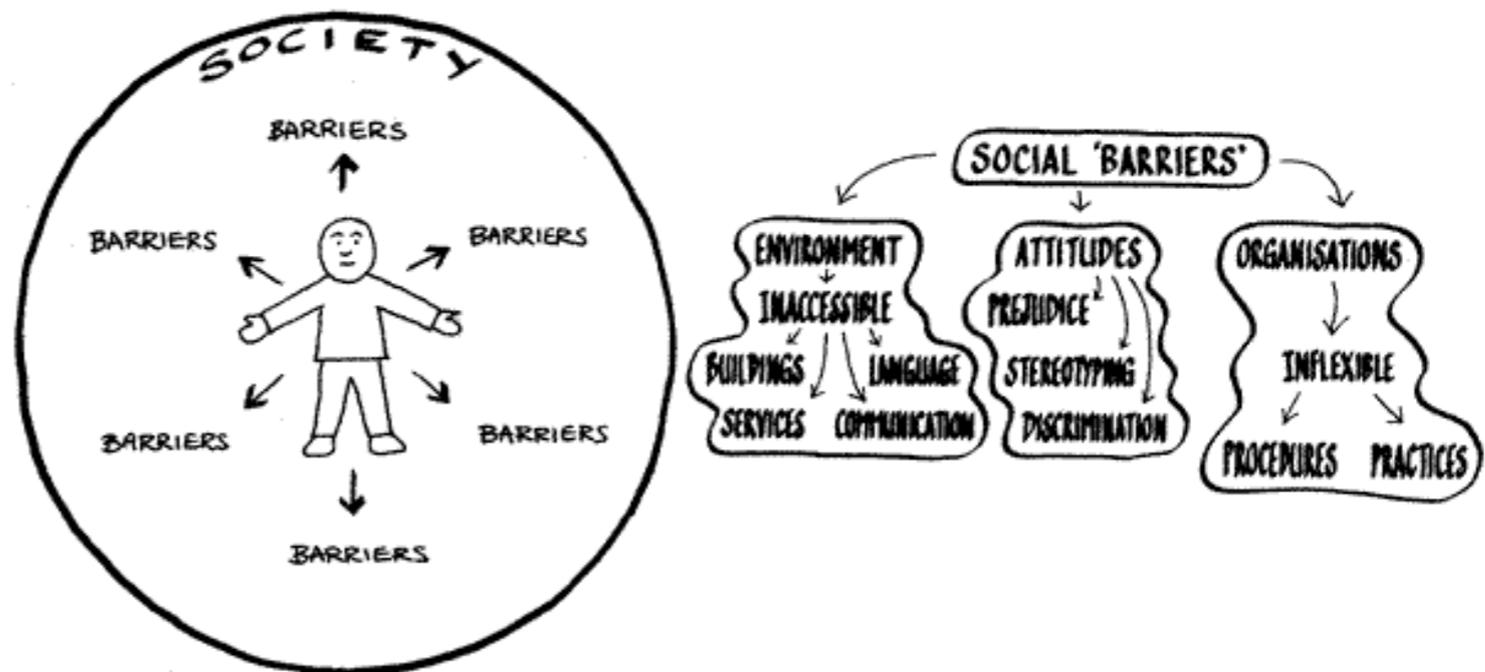
Ableism & Models of Disability



THE MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY



THE SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITY



The world always wants us dead.
Disabled people know that every
day of our lives.

- Crip Camp

What is disability justice?

A disability justice framework understands that:

- All bodies are unique and essential.
- All bodies have strengths and needs that must be met.
- We are powerful, not despite the complexities of our bodies but because of them.
- All bodies are confined by ability, race, gender, sexuality, class, nation state, religion, and more, and we cannot separate them.

A brief history of the disability rights movement



What about the ADA (and other laws)?

1973 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

Banned Discrimination on the basis of disability by recipients of federal funds.

1975 - Education of All Handicapped Children Act

1990 - Americans with Disability Act

2008 - ADA Amendments Act

1977 Sit-in: Longest Non-Violent Occupation of a federal building

ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ...

The Fed. Govt. is trying to
STEAL our Civil Rights!!

DEMONSTRATE!
to Demand Signing of
504 Regulations

SECTION 504 OF THE REHAB ACT OF 1973 WAS DEVELOPED BY CONGRESS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ANY PROGRAM RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDS. FOR FOUR YEARS WE HAVE WAITED FOR REGULATIONS TO BE SIGNED. WE CAN WAIT NO LONGER! OUR RIGHTS TO EDUCATION, JOBS, ACCESSIBLE BUILDINGS, DAY CARE, MEDICAL SERVICES, HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, ETC., ARE BEING WILFULLY WITHHELD BY THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

WHO SHOULD JOIN US? ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SUPPORTERS OF DISABLED RIGHTS.

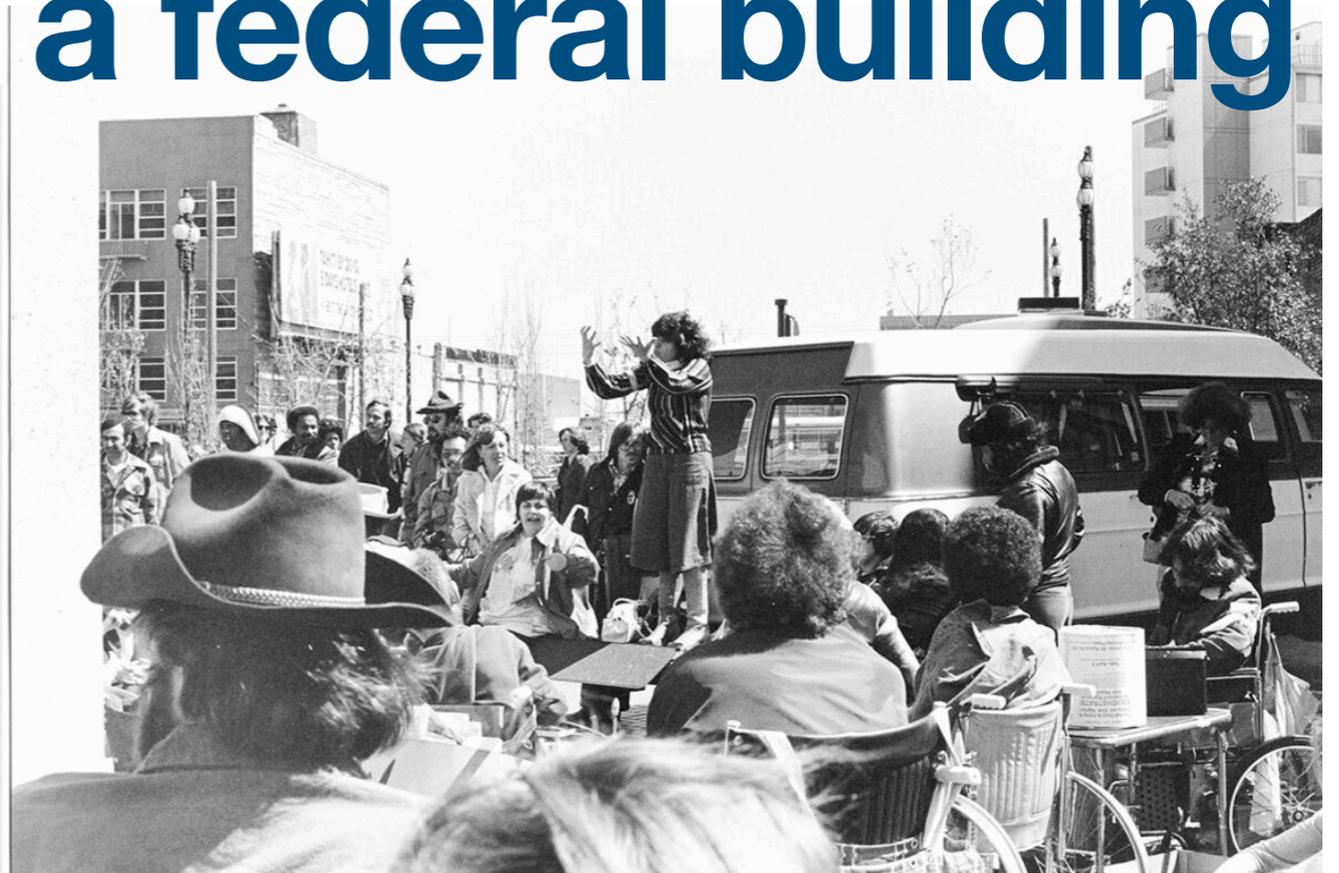
Tues. April 5

ALL DAY FROM 10 AM, RALLY AT NOON

HEW Office 50 Fulton St., S.F.
United Nations Plaza, (Off BART - Civic Center)

504 Emergency Coalition 2539 TELEGRAPH AVE., BERKELEY 94704
PHONE KITTY OR JONATHAN: DAYS 841-3790 NIGHTS 428-2286

INTERPRETER FOR PERSONS WHO ARE DEAF WILL BE PROVIDED.



- Courtesy Ken Stein

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/504-sit-in-san-francisco-1977-disability-rights-advocacy>

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“Deaf President Now”

1988 Protest at Gallaudet University



8-year-old Jennifer Keelan leads physically disabled protesters on the March 12, 1990, "Capitol Crawl." (© AP Images)



Jeff Markowitz/Associated Press



Capitol Crawl

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Focus on discrimination, not litigating disability

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First vetoed by Nixon. The

1975 - Education for All Handicapped Children Act

Guaranteed the right to a free and appropriate public education.

1990 - Americans with Disabilities Act

Outlawed discrimination on disability in employment, public accommodations, & transportation.

2008 - ADA Amendments Act

Focus on discrimination, not litigating disability

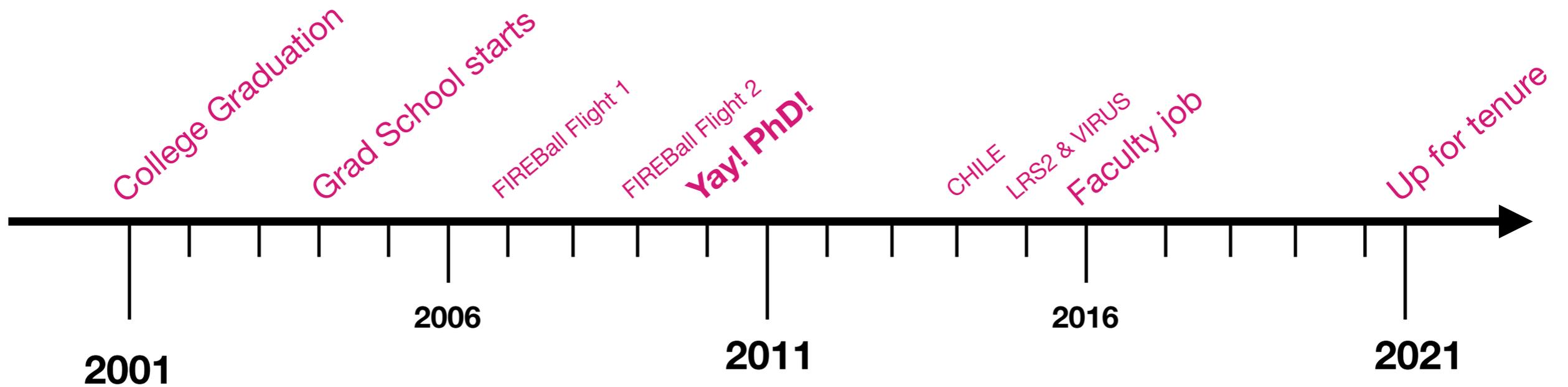




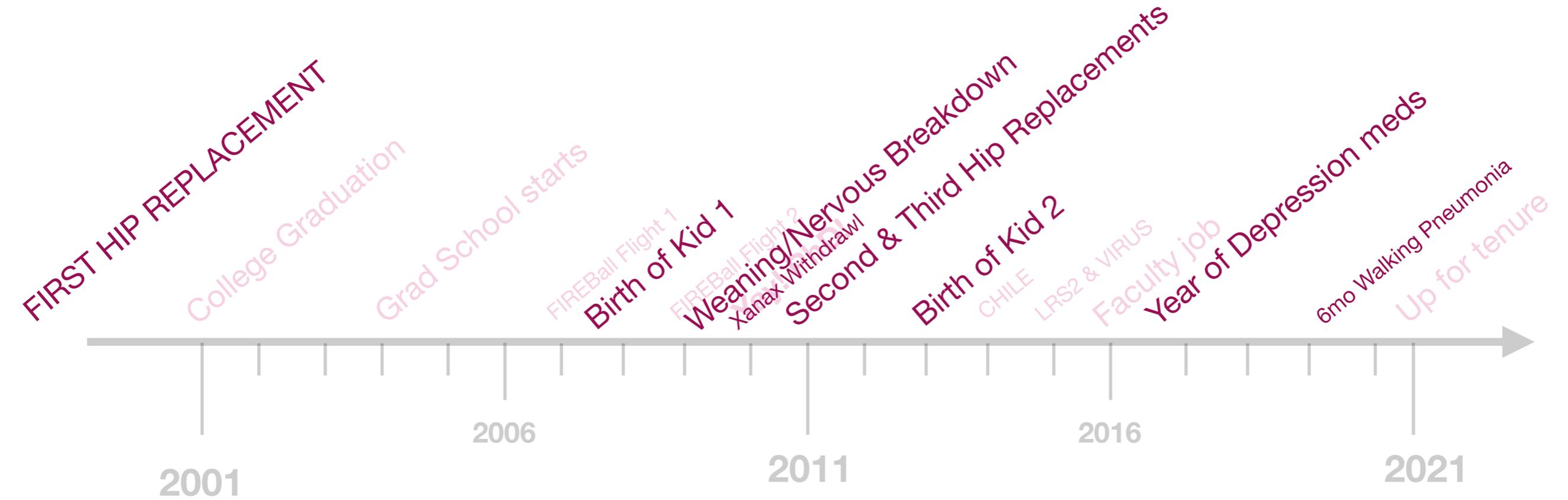


A storytelling diversion

My (Academic) Journey



My ~~(Academic)~~ Journey



Weird Disability Life Milestones

- Hospitalized on and off throughout childhood, I met most of the 49ers football team (including Joe Montana), and Willie Mays
- In elementary school, I raced wheelchairs and swam in the Jr. Special Olympics regionally.
- The State of California paid for much of my college education as part of a “job training” program for high students who graduated in California while receiving services for disabilities (I told them I wanted to be a physicist, and my case worker signed off.)
- Medical records are so hard to get transferred, my husband once met my orthopedic surgeon in a hospital parking lot on a weekend to handoff hard copy and software versions of my hip X-rays.
- The same doctor (who oversaw my last two hip replacements) told me I absolutely had to wait to have anymore children for at least a year after the last hip replacement, and then told me he didn’t even know why I would want more children. A year later when I followed up, he’d forgotten he’d said anything and acted surprised I waited.
- In graduate school I spent several months with decreased mobility and using crutches or a cane. Our campus was split level, and Columbia couldn’t get me a key for the one elevator between the two levels before I was done needing it.
- My mechanical engineer and I worked to reverse engineer one of my hip implants because it was discontinued and the vendor wouldn’t share interface dimensions for us to replace it.
- I travelled for work almost immediately after my last hip replacement, and so was driven through Heathrow airport on a golf cart. They use non-public corridors and left me for some time in a relatively abandoned employee area.

I had to try to fit into this
world that wasn't built for me.
- Crip Camp

Marie Claire: How are you doing? How has the pandemic treated you?

Lydia X.Z. Brown: Well, you know, we're living in a pandemic and the world is the white supremacist hellscape so you know, bad.

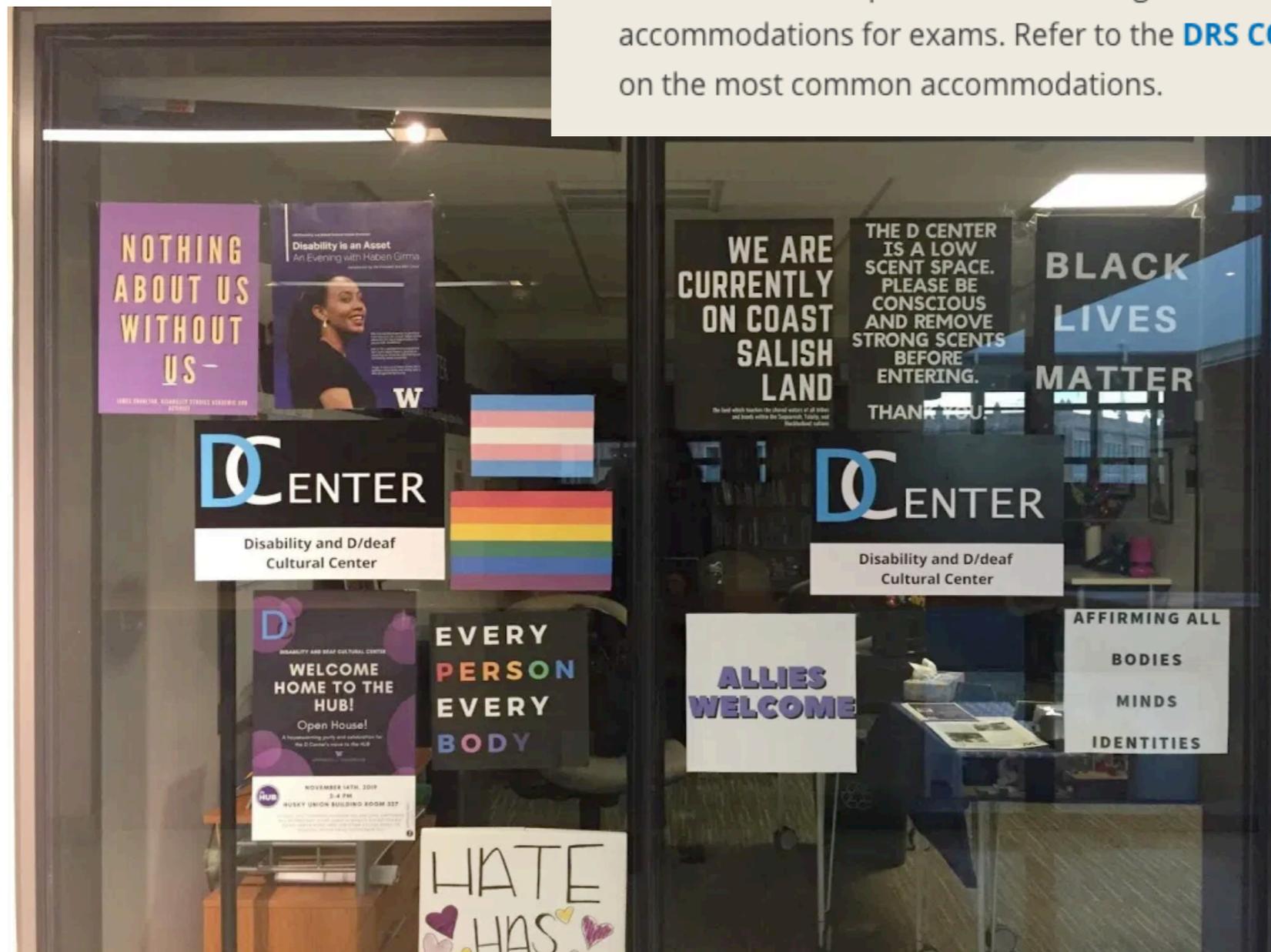
Moving forward

Disability on (my) Campus

DISABILITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Is DRS offering testing services for fall quarter?

DRS will not be proctoring or administering any exams this quarter. Course instructors are responsible for working with DRS students to provide their testing accommodations for exams. Refer to the [DRS COVID-19 Resources](#) for guidance on the most common accommodations.



Universal Design

Universal design is the design of buildings, products or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors.

Wikipedia

Does your syllabus build in flexibility of approach? Are required materials accessible and/or in multiple formats?

Do you reach out to students to offer access, rather than requiring them to inquire/improvise it?

Are your spaces accessible? Are doors heavy? Are walkways broad enough for folks with mobility aids or wheelchairs?

Are you trying to enforce control or enable learning?

AAS WGAD

Working Group on Accessibility & Disability

Founded in 2016

WGAD is tasked with promoting inclusion of and equity of opportunity for disabled astronomers at all career stages. A mindset of diverse access makes the experience of learning, working, and collaborating stronger for all. Ableism is discrimination in favor of able-bodied or neurotypical people; it is an entire system of thinking and doing that hurts disabled people and is a form of structural oppression. Disability is defined as any mental, cognitive, or physical condition that, due to society's structure, results in a significant barrier to engaging with society.

Disability and Astro/Physics

Astronomy for...

- Outreach
- Students (from K-12 to graduate school)
- Professionals

“Current metrics and models of productivity feed into expectations that are unrealistic for all, but even more so for astronomers who may need more time to complete work, require rest, or experience periodic hospitalization or flare-ups related to their conditions.”

Alicia Aarnio et al 2019, “Thinking Beyond ADA Compliance: How to Make Astronomy Accessible”



A 3D model of a planet from the University of Manchester’s ‘Communicating Physics and Astronomy to a Visually Impaired Audience’ workshop. Credit: University of Manchester/Dr Megan Argo

Is data accessible?

Are papers accessible?

Are career paths accessible?



Figure 2. The three spheres shown here represent different main sequence stars. Credit: S. Kraus

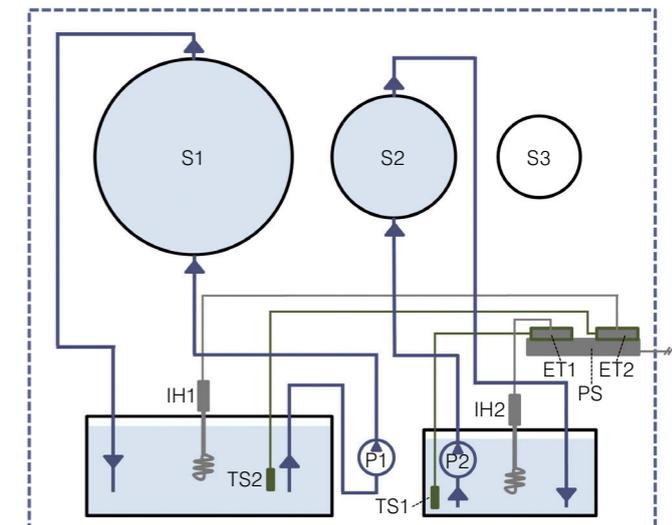


Figure 3. Schematic overview of the main sequence star model: spheres (S), pumps (P), immersion heaters (IH), electronic thermostats (ET), thermostat sensors (TS) and power strip (PS). Credit: S. Kraus

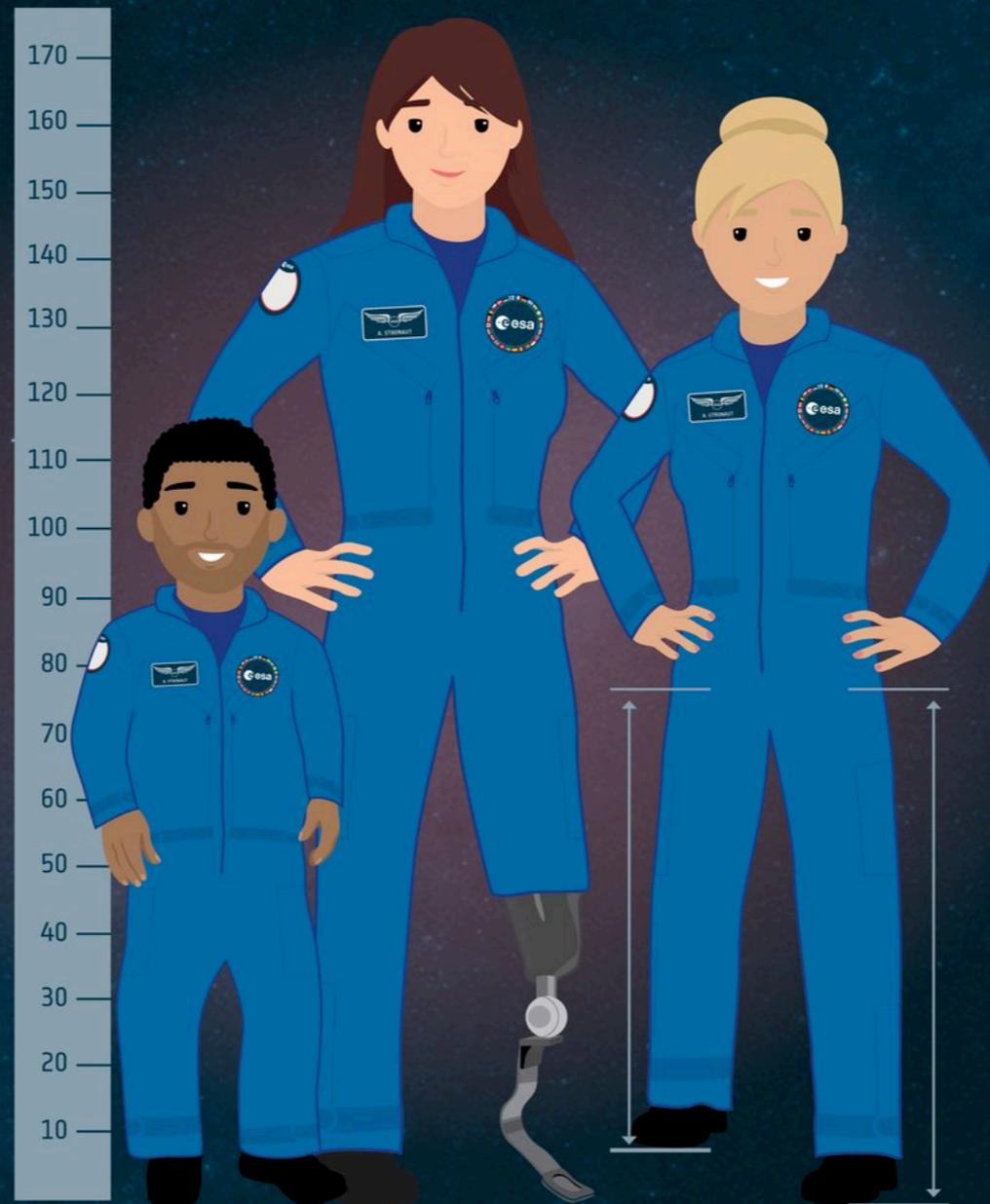
Recent Progress from the news...



PARASTRONAUT PROJECT

As part of ESA's commitment to enhance inclusiveness and fair representation, the Agency is launching the parastronaut feasibility project to assess the conditions for including **astronauts with disabilities** to work in space. This project is a new endeavour for Europe and a global first.

The feasibility project aims at offering **professional spaceflight opportunities** to a wider pool of talents. Starting with selected disabilities to have a thorough understanding of the potential challenges in terms of safety and operations in space, the scope of disabilities may then be extended aiming at broader inclusion.



The selected candidate(s) will work with ESA to assess and optimise the conditions allowing people with physical disabilities to **work and live in space**.

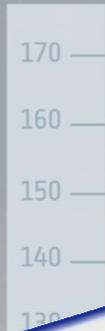
The educational and psychological requirements for these candidates are the same as for the ESA astronaut selection. However, with respect to **physical requirements**, this feasibility project will allow the inclusion of candidates with the following disabilities:

- a lower limb deficiency, as follows:
 - Single or double foot deficiency through ankle
 - Single or double leg deficiency below the knee
- a pronounced leg length difference
- a short stature (<130 cm)

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A. D. A.
THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

*"To Boldly Go Where
Everyone Else Has Gone Before"*

FREE OUR PEOPLE



These candidates are the physical requirements for the ESA astronaut selection. However, with respect to **physical requirements**, this feasibility project will allow the inclusion of candidates with the following disabilities:

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Some resources....

- Wanda Diaz Merced “How a blind astronomer found a way to hear the stars”, https://www.ted.com/talks/wanda_diaz_merced_how_a_blind_astronomer_found_a_way_to_hear_the_stars
- Crip Camp (Netflix)
- History of the Disability Rights Movement from the National Parks Service: <https://www.nps.gov/articles/disabilityhistoryrightsmovement.htm>
- Lydia X.Z. Brown: <https://autistichoya.net>
- Maysoon Zayid “I’ve got 99 problems, and palsy is just one.”: https://www.ted.com/talks/maysoon_zayid_i_got_99_problems_palsy_is_just_one?language=en
- “Six Disabled Activists on Why the Resistance Must Be Accessible” <https://www.autostraddle.com/be-the-change-six-disabled-activists-on-why-the-resistance-must-be-accessible-368956/>
- “ADA Disabilities Act History”: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/22/us/ada-disabilities-act-history.html>
- #CripTheVote Archives: <http://cripthevote.blogspot.com/p/chats.html>
- The Harriet Tubman Collective: <https://harriettubmancollective.tumblr.com/>
- US Census: Americans with Disabilities 2010 report: <https://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/p70-131.pdf>
- Cornell University Disability Statistics search engine: <https://www.disabilitystatistics.org/reports/acs.cfm?statistic=4>