

# DO-IT

# NEWS

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## Director's Digressions

by Sheryl Burgstahler

I'm sad to report that Anna Schneider—'93 Scholar, Ambassador, speaker at DO-IT events, NASA Scholarship recipient, UW

*To reduce printing costs and yet still share exciting news from DO-IT, we provide a short print version and an expanded version online at <http://www.washington.edu/doi/Newsletters/Nov04/>. Contact DO-IT if you would like a printed copy of the expanded newsletter.*

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graduate in cell and molecular biology, artist, volunteer, businesswoman, daughter, sister, aunt, and friend—lost her battle with the cancer that took her sight as a child. Vibrant and determined, she was still attending to her



Mary Kay customers and helping plan an art exhibit until her death on June 29, 2004. Her art was exhibited at the University of Washington during Summer Study, where she was honored with a DO-IT Trailblazer Award (see related article).

Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Anna will cherish memories of her academic accomplishments, business sense, artistic ability, sense of color, determination, curiosity, creativity, strong opinions about almost everything, and unique sense of humor. Our lives are richer because of her.

Anna's thoughts and suggestions about building a more accessible world will live on in DO-IT's many training videotapes in which she was featured (see <http://www.washington.edu/doi/Video/>.) At the conclusion of *Working Together: Science Teachers and Students with Disabilities*, she emphati-

cally states, "I think it's very important that science teachers understand that people with disabilities can do science. We have the intelligence and capabilities to do it, and it's important that we are exposed to science just like people without disabilities are so we can better make choices about our lives, like what career we want to go into and what we want to study."

### **Boeing Expands DO-IT Scholars Program** by Sheryl Burgstahler

With a generous grant from Boeing, DO-IT was able to fund several Scholars in 2004 in addition to those funded by the state. Thanks, Boeing! DO-IT invested your money wisely—in preparing skilled college students, workers, and community leaders for the next generation.



*2004 Courage Campers outside computer lab*

### **DO-IT and Camp Courage Celebrate Ten-Year Partnership** by Sheryl Burgstahler

For the tenth year, DO-IT cosponsored an Internet, College, and Career Preview program as part of the yearly Teen Camp session at Camp Courage, MN. A dozen college-bound teens with disabilities participated. They explored resources on the Internet, developed a website (see <http://depts.washington.edu/doitsum/Courage04/>) to share their experiences, and discovered their learning styles, internal and external assets,

career interests, and college options. They communicated with DO-IT Scholars, Pals, Ambassadors, and Mentors. They took a field trip to a local university and practiced requesting accommodations from a professor. I was the lead instructor. Rick Light, Chris Rosenberg, Mamoru Iwabuchi, and Bill Taylor provided technical and instructional support. Tracy Benson and Aaron Corcoran, two previous campers who are now in college, stopped by to speak to the group about their steps to success.

### **Summer Study '04: What Do the Phase I Scholars Do?**

DO-IT Phase I Scholars participate in a two-week, live-in Summer Study session on the University of Washington campus in Seattle, Washington. They learn about college life; surf the Internet; interact with peers, staff, and mentors; and have fun. Below, '04 Phase I Scholars share some of their experiences. Note that, reluctantly, articles were edited by DO-IT staff to make them short enough to include in this publication, and most are found in the online version of this issue at <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Newsletters/Nov04/>. Additional articles by Scholars can be found in earlier newsletters at <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Newsletters/>.

### **Service Dogs: Friends and Workers** by Phase I Scholars Vishal and Lukas

#### **From an observer's perspective**

My name is Vishal. In DO-IT Summer Study this year, we got to know three service dogs and their companions quite well. Through observing these dogs and their companions, I learned a lot.

These three dogs, Mystere, Fisher, and Silly, are perfect matches for their companions Lukas, Maryann, and Meg, respectively. They were always by their companions unless it was nighttime and they were “off duty.” The love from these dogs is obvious. At one time, during photo day, Fisher and Mystere got up on their companions’ laps to be in the pictures with them. It is amazing that they are so obedient and respond to their companions so well. Which brings me to training for service dogs. From what I observed, the dogs and their companions must have gone through rigorous training to get to the point where the dogs obey commands so well and for their companions to have the type of composure necessary to teach their dogs. Although service dogs have training at an organization, they still have to learn with their companions!

Last but not least, the dogs have fun also! During the evening when we were done with the day’s classes and had dorm activities, the companions took off the dogs’ work harnesses, which they wear all day when “on duty.” Taking these harnesses off signaled to the dogs that they were “off duty.” Then they would roam around looking for people to play with or be petted by. One day, Fisher and Mystere were wrestling each other, with Robert kind of playing as well, while a lot of us watched. It was fun to see them play and have fun. These three dogs are truly amazing and so are their companions. We love ya pups!

### **From a companion’s perspective**

My name is Lukas and my service dog is Mystere. I love having Mystere as my service dog but, more importantly, as my companion. She is always there for me. I love knowing that my parents and my brother can leave me at the house alone, but I don’t ever feel alone, because Mystere is there. I’m thankful everyday that Mystere is a part of my life. Yes, the paperwork, training, and everyday work is long and hard,

but it all pays off. I look at this as investing a little chunk of time to receive an enormous return. I thank the organization I got Mystere from for everything they have done to make owning Mystere possible. You guys are outstanding!

### **Microsoft Field Trip**

by Phase I Scholars Andrew and Bud

On our Microsoft trip we had a good time. When we got there, we were taken into a soundstage where we heard an interesting lecture about Windows™ accessibility. After the lecture they brought in pizza and we ate and socialized for a while before the next activity began. After lunch, a panel of Microsoft employees with disabilities talked to us. They talked about the assistive devices they use to do their work and the overall environment of Microsoft. Next, we toured the Microsoft production studios and learned about broadcasting.

We then went to the Microsoft Museum where there was a lot to see. There were all kinds of fancy devices and TVs to play with and watch including X-Box and motion detector games. The trip was fun and full of information.

### **Planetarium Intergalactic Wonders**

by Phase I Scholars Maryann and Makenna

The DO-IT Scholars got a great opportunity to visit the astronomy building and planetarium at the University of Washington during the 2004 Summer Study. One of the things that is impressive about the astronomy building is the great accessibility for many types of disability needs. The powered entrance door is very wide with a large hand press plate outside. The press plate could have been more visible for first-time users with its location identified with a sign or light. The elevator to the planetarium is large enough to accommodate three wheelchairs.

Mark Claire, an astronomy graduate student, was the speaker for the Astronomy Exploration presentation. The information Mark provided about the solar system was detailed, and he took the time to explain everything so that it was easy to understand. The planetarium had very comfortable seating for observing the night sky and viewing the stars and planets. The seating was at a good height for transfers from wheelchairs. Mark was also able to program and reposition the solar system projector to give examples of what it would be like to observe stars and planets from different places on Earth, including Seattle. It was easy for everyone to see the large domed screen because of the circular seating and it gave the feeling of the planets and stars moving toward you.

We also had a chance to see pictures of the surface of Mars taken by the Mars Rovers and sent through downloads back to Earth. The pictures showed craters, landscapes, and possible traces of previous water existence. Other pictures Mark showed in the planetarium were from the Cassini spacecraft that orbited Saturn. The pictures of Saturn's rings had a lot more detail than those astronomers had previously seen or expected. Astronomers and scientists gained information about Saturn that was never available to them before. Mark also described the Cassini spacecraft's entry through the Mars atmosphere and its landing on the surface of Mars. The Cassini used rockets, a parachute, and air bags for the landing and bounced like a superball on impact with Mars's surface!

Mark gave everyone an opportunity to learn more with open discussion and easily understood answers to all our questions. The DO-IT Scholars seemed to enjoy "Exploring our Solar System." It was a great learning experience and fun at the same time. Thanks Mark for your time and a cool fantastic journey to the stars and planets!

## **The Aquarium**

by Phase I Scholars Meg and Katie

As you walk into the second building of the aquarium, the otter and seal exhibits are not the first things you see; you see some people, a few exhibits, and the start of a long (yet accessible) path to follow along your exploration. As you continue down the hallway, you can see the various sizes and shapes, from side exhibits to whole rooms, and glass walls with animals that swim with ease.

There can be anything from a room of crowded people to a few scattered people trailing along like sailboats following the wind and flowing with the tide. Taking time to admire each display, you leisurely tug your way along, admiring the fast-paced sharks and salmon until you finally reach the climax of your trip, the otters and seals. On approaching these magnificent animals, you admire their grace and willingness to be the center of attention. You take your time to look upon these highly esteemed mortal beings and then make your way to the end of your insightful journey.

## **Dorm Activities**

by Phase I Scholars Tracy and Laura

Through the DO-IT Scholars Program, we have had the opportunity to learn many things about college. We learned that college students are very busy people. They have quite a bit of homework, projects, and studying for tests to do. College students also engage in extracurricular activities. There are also many activities that they can involve themselves in at the dorms.

At McCarty Hall, where we stayed, there are many activities in which residents can involve themselves. For those who like using their thinking skills and strategy, there are card and board games that they can play. Others who like to use their active skills can

play pool, foosball, and Ping-Pong in the lobby. There are also outdoor activities that can be played on the fields and tennis courts. People can watch movies in the lounges. Finally, one activity that many of us Phase 1 Scholars enjoyed was going back to our dorm rooms and reflecting on what we had done that day.

Reflecting on our experiences on the UW campus, we have noticed that college is a very busy time in people's lives. There is so much to do and so little time to do it in. It is nice, however, to live in a dorm where there are activities that you can participate in during your precious free time. McCarty Hall has those activities.



*DO-IT participants explore activities at Pacific Science Center*

### **Pacific Science Center**

by Phase I Scholars Russell and Alex

Although there were many things to see at the Pacific Science Center, we agreed that the IMAX movie, *Bugs in 3-D*, was the best part. The most impressive thing was the depth created by the 3-D glasses. Images seemed to pop out of the screen and gave us a sense of realism. With the huge screen and the great surround-sound, it was definitely better than your average movie experience.

Some of the other exhibits that were particularly fascinating were the butterfly house and the glow-in-the-dark exhibit. The butterfly house was a good way to get ready for the IMAX movie. It was a fun experience to see all the different kinds of butterflies and to try to identify them from the chart you receive on your way into the house. Before leaving, you have to be checked for any butterflies that may be catching a ride on your clothes. The glow-in-the-dark exhibit was also interesting. It was about different animals that glow. For example, fireflies glow to communicate, and some deep-sea fish glow to lure their prey.

Overall, the Pacific Science Center was definitely a worthwhile field trip.

### **The University of Washington HIT Lab**

by Phase I Scholars Kathleen, Michael, Julie, and Blanca

On Monday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, Phase I Scholars visited the Human Interface Technology (HIT) Lab. Our group started by doing virtual surgery on a virtual human hand by giving the hand sutures. To do this we had to wear 3-D glasses and manipulate the suturing tool while viewing the process on the computer screen. Judging by participant reactions, suturing is a complicated process not recommended for the weak of stomach. Several of us decided that performing that kind of procedure, though interesting, is definitely not one of our choices for a future career! Next, we read *The Magic Book*—a book that, when viewed through special VR (Virtual Reality) lenses, produced a 3-D image on the picture side of the book.

Later we interacted with Virtual Air Hockey. We also interacted with a Virtual DJ device that played various types of music when disks with particular symbols were placed underneath a camera.

Finally, we wrapped up with a visit to the VR simulator for a game called “Snow World.” Perhaps a better description for this simulator would be “Snow Wars,” because what you do is shoot anything and everything with snowballs. “Snow World” is one of the virtual reality programs designed by the HIT Lab for the treatment of burn patients. Since the process for changing the dressing on a burn is often painful, the patients are immersed in a virtual world, which distracts them from the pain they would feel in the real world by making them think they are somewhere else. In order to put patients in the virtual world, they wear a special piece of equipment that resembles a bulky pair of sunglasses on the exterior with wires running out the back. On the inside of these “glasses” is a screen that shows what you are looking at in the virtual world while the small speakers give off the corresponding sounds of your surroundings. The patient controls his field of view by turning his head. For instance, a patient turns his head to the right and the direction he is looking in the virtual world will also turn to the right. The patient is in this virtual world has access to a keyboard. By tapping the space bar, the patient can throw snowballs at whatever he is looking at, and the information for the things he sees, hears, and is able to interact with is transmitted by a computer. There are penguins, snowmen, polar bears, snow turrets, and Ice Soldiers that you throw snowballs at in “Snow World.” The turrets and ice soldiers actually fire back at you and take a lot of snow balls to destroy.

Some of us became so immersed in “Snow World” that we found it hard to separate from the game! Other uses for this technology include helping people overcome phobias. The potential of this technology in our future remains to be seen, but it is an asset to the treatment of patients in the present.

All in all, going to the HIT lab was a VERY fun trip, and here’s hoping we DO-IT again next year!

### **DO-IT Scholars Speak for Themselves** by Sheryl Burgstahler

At the end of Summer Study, I asked Phase I Scholars what they learned. Here are some of their responses:

- *Professors are a lot nicer than people say or than I thought.*
- *You can go to a professor beforehand and ask for accommodations, and they prefer this.*
- *It is important to be on time.*
- *Time management is really important.*
- *I learned a lot and had fun riding a bike.*
- *I learned to get along with a roommate.*
- *Even though we have different disabilities, we often share common experiences and can learn from each other.*
- *I learned there are many different options in the field of engineering.*
- *I learned to take advantage of every opportunity.*
- *It is really important to make a lot of contacts, because you never know what you could learn from someone, and these are great opportunities.*
- *You have to be brave sometimes.*
- *We are all different and unique, and it is important not to define people by how they look or what their disability is.*
- *I learned I am not the only person with this disability and that other people are struggling with the same thing.*
- *You have to have written documentation about your disability to get accommodations in college.*
- *I made new friends.*
- *I learned to be more open and willing to share about my disability; I don’t have to be shy about it.*
- *You should have your college application in early.*
- *I learned that I have to take responsibility for myself.*

- *Life at college is way different than high school.*
- *I learned that it is important to lead sometimes and follow sometimes.*

### **Summer Study '04: What Do the Phase II Scholars Do?**

Phase II Scholars return to the University of Washington campus for their second Summer Study. They meet the Phase I Scholars as they participate in their first Summer Study, learn about college life and career preparation, and participate in a one-week workshop with postsecondary instructors. The following articles summarize some of the experiences of the 2004 Phase II Scholars.

### **Phase II Scholars Explore the “Art” of Computing**

by Phase II Scholars Annemarie, Jessie, Tasha, and Jamie

As frequently as we all use computers, rarely do we realize the complex problem-solving skills necessary to create the programs. In August 2004, we touched the surface of such programming in the “Game of Life” Summer Study workshop. Instructed by Professor Richard Ladner, several undergraduate and graduate assistants, and a DO-IT intern, Scott, we worked on separate projects for a week that demonstrated a few of the different uses for computer programming.

Scott created several “hunter and prey” and “maze” games. He had to work through the difficulties of “debugging,” or finding errors in the program code, and use logic to create the appropriate behavior for the characters of his games.

Creating programs for an entirely different

use, Scholars Tasha and Jamie developed maps of the University of Washington campus for blind students and visitors. They had to first simplify the visual maps through image processing and then add Braille text to the resulting images. These maps were printed on a tactile printer that has the ability to punch bumps into paper.

Annemarie used image processing for a slightly different application. She configured gray-scale images into black-and-white images using a process called dithering, which is like pointillist art. Additionally, she applied sharpening programs, edge detections, and background filters to find crystallized proteins automatically from images.

Jessie worked with Stephen Wolfram’s *A New Kind of Science* as a basis for using more classical programs. Several of these resulted in complex and beautiful patterns and shapes.

The workshop revealed the wonders of computer programming as well as the frustrations. All of us experienced many instances of satisfaction, but they were all preceded by diligence and intense problem solving.

### **Spaced Out**

by Phase II Scholars Shaun, Patrick, Tressa, and Josh

During Summer Study our group learned about the ever-changing solar system. In the “Spaced Out” workshop our instructor, Chris Laws, taught us about the planets and formation of craters by the collision with comets and asteroids.

On the first day we all shared what we already knew about the solar system. Some of these things included what’s in the solar system, the sizes of the planets, and the distance from planet to planet. We even

made a simple but accurate model of the relative distances between the planets of the solar system.

On the second day our group learned about craters and how to use them to help determine the age of planetary surfaces. We simulated making craters by using sand and water droplets. Once we had practice with crater counting, we were able to test our skill by applying it to images and graphs of the surface of Mars.

On the third day we were taught the difference between comets and asteroids, as well as how to distinguish between a meteor, meteoroid, and meteorite. We participated in a simulation that demonstrated how asteroids and meteorites affect a planet's surface. We dropped balls of various masses from different levels and measured dimensions of the impact. We also froze hard-boiled eggs in liquid nitrogen to simulate the collision of an asteroid with a planet.

The fourth day was the most interesting of all. We simulated the creation of comets by making comet ice cream! We used the ice cream contents to represent different components of a comet. We were even able to watch it freeze using liquid nitrogen. On our last day, we learned about planet rings and prepared for our group presentation at Summer Study's closing ceremonies.

Overall we really enjoyed the experience of this workshop and found that the ever-changing solar system is very interesting. We would like to thank the DO-IT program for offering this class and our instructor for being a fun and informative teacher.

### **Virtual Veggies Workshop**



*Phase II Scholars participate in Virtual Veggies workshop*

by Phase II Scholars Andrew, Conrad, Crystal, Skylor, and Jamie

Working as a team, we five Scholars, interns Gimmie and Andrea, our personal assistant Sam, and Suzanne Weghorst and other staff members created a virtual garden using cutting-edge technology in the UW Virtual Reality Lab. We searched online for pictures to use as models for objects to use in our garden. In order to create the garden, we first had to learn about the guidelines we needed to follow to make our virtual garden accessible to people with disabilities and the elderly. We also learned that our virtual garden should have a certain "flow," meaning that the garden should be challenging yet enjoyable at the same time.

Then we learned about the technology used to build a virtual garden. The software we used was 3D Studio Max, a program that makes computer graphics. We also used markers, which are pieces of paper that are perfect squares with an asymmetrical shape within each. Once a marker was completed, we put the Webcam over it; the computer was able to read it and create an image that appeared on the computer. Once these steps were repeated, we were able to create a virtual garden or anything else we could dream up; there are no limits. This project



made us think outside the box and challenged each of us in different ways. It was made possible with the additional help of interns. We owe a special thanks to everyone who made this experience possible.

### **Another Great Summer for DO-IT Interns!**

by DO-IT Staff Scott Bellman and Tami Tidwell

Many students use the summer to relax and enjoy the sun, but it is also a great time for internships! Working during the summer offers students a chance to practice accommodations, network with professionals, try out jobs, and earn some extra money. Here are some examples of the internships of DO-IT participants in 2004:

- assistive technology trainer for a public library
- research position at a university for Global Information Systems
- web design work at a speech pathology clinic
- administrative assistant in an FAA engineering office
- a position at the U.S. Defense Contract Management Agency
- four positions at Microsoft in software design and testing
- analyst for Citigroup in New York City
- computer assistant in the nonprofit sector
- computer assistant for the City of Seattle
- administrative assistant for the City of Seattle
- health science recreational therapy aide
- researcher in Washington, DC, working with the Food and Drug Administration Center for Food Safety and Nutrition
- researcher in the Department of Public Health and Nutrition at the University of Washington
- technical assistant for National Park Service
- engineer for Medtronic Physio Control
- interpreter for Whitman Mission National Historic Site
- network administrator at the Portland

- Department of Environmental Quality
- observing classes at Crescent Valley and Corvallis High School for engineering project at Oregon State University
- chemistry lab assistant at the University of Idaho
- associate at World Bank in Washington, DC

In addition to these paid internships, DO-IT participants completed several internships without pay. These included

- nine DO-IT Summer Study program staff internships and
- a trip to Japan to work on DO-IT international connections.

Most students found their internships working with DO-IT staff members. Others worked with DO-IT partners such as ENTRYPOINT! (<http://www.entrypoint.org/>), the Workforce Recruitment Program (<http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/brochures/wrp1.html>), and the American Association of People with Disabilities (<http://www.aapd-dc.org/>).

Supervisors had many positive things to say about their summer interns, such as “In all honesty, [our DO-IT Intern] is the most intelligent and enthusiastic undergraduate student I have ever worked with in my twenty-four years in academia. I look forward to continuing collaboration with her” and “I see this one hiring situation as a major breakthrough in hiring and it can be seen as a possible role model for other parks and programs.”

All of these student interns have something new for their résumé and can count on their summer supervisors as future references and advocates. Congratulations to all of you on a job well done!

### **DO-IT Mentor Profile**



by Bill Taylor

Camp Courage provides a camp experience for folks with disabilities and is one of DO-IT's summer projects where I volunteer my time. A couple of summers ago, DO-

IT was ending a summer session at Camp Courage in Minnesota. One of the campers was in tears. I asked her what was wrong, and she haltingly replied that camp was ending and she had to go home. I said, "Yes?" not understanding the problem. She sobbed, "You don't understand, at home no one appreciates the problems I go through. Here, everyone understands and it doesn't matter." Here was a young girl that had a memorable camp experience and did not want it to end.

How does one get an opportunity to experience that emotion? Well, I went to Sheryl and Dave Burgstahler's for dinner several years ago and they told me about the DO-IT program. I offered to help and, since Sheryl never turns a resource down, I think I was on the Mentor list before the night was over. I'm not sure what all the requirements are to become a DO-IT Mentor, but perhaps an interest in helping young people grow and develop and a career in Software Engineering qualify. I worked for Boeing when it was called Douglas, and McDonnell Douglas, and then again when it was called Boeing. I worked on the Saturn/ Apollo program at the Cape when we were launching men to the moon. I worked for Boeing making an automated transportation system to move students around the University of West Virginia campus in Morgantown. Software engineers get to do lots of weird stuff. But the weirdest of all is being Dorm Dad for the DO-IT Summer Study program. Like the requirements for becoming a DO-IT Mentor,

I don't think the requirements for Dorm Dad are things you can fully put down on paper. Being the DO-IT Dorm Dad for the last few years has given me the opportunity to get to know some neat Scholars who are about to meet new challenges of college and life as young adults.

A few years ago at Summer Study one of the Scholars was in an electric wheelchair, but she played a powerful Ping-Pong game with one hand on the paddle and the other on the wheelchair's joystick. She was a tiny young lady and listened carefully when it was announced that if the summer schedule was too tiring, the Scholars could inquire about taking a nap. So this young lady asked if she could skip class in favor of a nap. When asked if she was tired, she said, "No, but if I take a nap now I can stay up later and play Ping-Pong!" Nap denied.

Perhaps all will not have as emotional an experience as that Courage Camper or as cute an experience as that Ping-Pong champ, but I also doubt that any DO-IT Scholar ever forgets their DO-IT Summer Study experience. I've sure had fun being part of it.

### **DO-IT Staff Profile**

by Tami Tidwell



Hi there. My name is Tami Tidwell. November will mark my one-year anniversary with DO-IT! Most of my work time is spent on various activities helping students with disabilities

develop the skills they need to secure their dream jobs. These include résumé and interview workshops, arranging work-based learning experiences, and communicating with students through newsletters and one-

on-one contact. Participating in Summer Study 2004 was a high point of my first year at DO-IT.

I am originally from Fort Worth, Texas, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from Texas Christian University. I changed my major five times before meeting a professor of behavioral psychology who allowed me to combine classes from the Communication Sciences and Disorders, English, dance, special education, and psychology departments into a degree that focused on my passions. I enjoy being creative and finding alternative solutions to everyday problems.

My career has taken me in many directions. My first job was as a case manager, then program manager for a group home for children with Autism. What I enjoyed the most about this experience was bringing children together with their families, which is not a typical focus of the group home system. When the group home closed, I became a staffing coordinator at a temporary employment agency working with some of the largest human resources departments in Seattle. A year later, an acquaintance offered me the opportunity to trade municipal bonds for a national broker. It was an excellent learning experience, but I missed working with people. A contact offered me the opportunity to recruit for companies like Children's Hospital, Seattle Times, and Starbucks. Over the next three years, I fine-tuned my recruiting skills and became the most successful recruiter in the company. The downturn in the economy was very hard on the business, forcing us to close our Seattle office; I was the last recruiter to leave. I took the next year and a half off to contemplate and enjoy two beautiful Seattle summers, abundant gardens, and family travel. Then I met Doug Hayman from DO-IT, I learned about the program and an open position that seemed like a great fit for me, and the rest is history!

I enjoy using my varied experiences to benefit students on their road to college and careers. The relationships I've built over the past year are invaluable. I look forward to expanding this network and working together to create more opportunities for DO-IT participants.



### **DO-IT Ambassador Profile**

by Brad Barringer

Who am I? I define myself as a computer nerd, a movie lover, and a small giant. I am a fun-loving, yet occasionally moody, guy who enjoys books,

movies, music, computers, and talking about pretty much anything. I consider myself to be somewhat of a learning disabilities poster boy as I have ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity-Disorder), Dyslexia, Bipolar Disorder, depression, and anxiety. I worked with medications for years to try to control all my disabilities but found I didn't like the dead feeling I got when I was taking them. For a couple of years now I have been working on managing my disabilities without the medications. Some aspects of life are harder, but I enjoy the rush I get from the ADHD that makes my mind run at the speed of light and letting my imagination run with that.

I was first involved with DO-IT in 2001 as a Scholar and moved through the program to become an Ambassador and Mentor. I love all the net chats and discussions through the DO-IT online community, but I really love DO-IT Summer Study and missed it too much to stay away this year, so I volunteered my time at many of the Summer Study activities. It will probably be that way for years to come! My younger brother

is in the program now. It's great to watch him laugh and learn with the other Scholars. DO-IT is a one-of-a-kind program, and I wouldn't trade it for the world. You just can't find better people anywhere else on the planet.

### **2004 DO-IT Trailblazer Awards**

by Scott Bellman, DO-IT Staff

DO-IT Trailblazer Award recipients are DO-IT community members who have forged new pathways that will benefit others. Through their ongoing work and accomplishments, award recipients have changed the way the world views people with disabilities and their potential to succeed in challenging careers and activities.

#### **Cheri Blauwet Trek**

DO-IT Ambassador and '96 Scholar  
"For achievements in athletics and academics."

Cheri Blauwet began her academic and racing career in 1998 at the University of Arizona. She majored in molecular and cellular biology and was captain of the track team. Blauwet maintained a 4.0 GPA and was selected to USA Today's All-American Academic Team. In November 2002, Blauwet won first place in the wheelchair division of the New York City Marathon. Four months later she captured first place in the Los Angeles Marathon. Later in the month, she set a new women's road course record at the Carlsbad 5000 Wheelchair Invitational race. Blauwet shattered the 1996 world record of 12 minutes and 8 seconds, by crossing the finish line in 12 minutes and 4 seconds. In April 2003, Blauwet entered the Boston Marathon, placing second; she won in 2004. She is a three-time Paralympic medalist, capturing three medals in track and field events. Blauwet is now in medical school at Stanford pursuing a career in developmental pediatrics.



*Mike Dedman with Phase II Scholars*

#### **Mike Dedman**

Education Specialist, National Parks Service  
"For improving access in the National Parks Service."

As a Summer Study Phase II Workshop Instructor for two years, Mike taught about "Accessibility of National Parks" and facilitated a visit to Klondike National Park. He taught Scholars to use their expertise and make recommendations for improved park service access. He initiated regional nationwide training sessions about access in National Parks education programs and websites and has been a strong advocate for National Parks visitors with disabilities. He also initiated a story-reading program for hospitalized youth. Mike Dedman has been active in helping students explore careers with the Parks system. He regularly sends information about job and internship openings to DO-IT staff, inviting applicants with disabilities. In 2002, Mike taught a Phase I session called "Science-Related Careers in National Parks" to get Scholars excited about careers with the Parks. He has gone out of his way to support student career goals and this past summer worked with a DO-IT intern funded by the National Parks.

## **Charity Ranger**

DO-IT Student Staff

“For improving access and support on a postsecondary campus.”

Charity was instrumental in the development of Disability Advocacy Student Alliance (DASA)—a student group facilitated for and by students. Their goal is to address the needs and concerns of the disability community and its allies on the University of Washington campus. They represent student interests while working with allied student groups, the UW administration, and the off-campus community. DASA regularly hosts meetings, events, advocacy projects, and web dialogue. Charity also has worked for DO-IT as a student staff member, a speaker at special events, and conference support staff.

## **Anna Schneider**

DO-IT Ambassador and '93 Scholar

“For accomplishments in academics, martial arts, and fine arts.”

Anna was one of DO-IT's first Scholars, joining the program in 1993, and was an intern in 1995. Anna always had a mischievous sense of humor and once described Summer Study to a new Scholar as “Disability Boot Camp.” She received a NASA scholarship to attend the University of Washington and graduated with a bachelor's degree in microbiology.

Anna lost her sight as a child after a bout with cancer, but she never let her blindness hold her back from anything she wanted to do. She earned a black belt in Aikido martial arts, had her own business as a Mary Kay consultant, and was an accomplished artist visualizing designs and colors in her mind's eye that she translated into vibrant pieces of art. Her work was displayed this August at the University of Washington during the 2004 Summer Study program.

As a DO-IT Ambassador and Mentor in person and online, Anna encouraged younger Scholars to set high goals and be creative in reaching them. Anna participated in DO-IT Success Panels, and she was featured in DO-IT videos (<http://www.washington.edu/doi/Video/>). She was always a good sport and always up for a new challenge. Anna was also a DO-IT employee and “star” of DO-IT Show and Tell, a program in which she visited first-grade classes to talk about how she did things in alternative ways. She brought students their names in Braille and asked them to guess how she cooked, made sure her socks matched, and did artwork without sight.

## **Tech Tips: Spyware Surpasses Viruses, Worms and Unintended Deletions**

by Doug Hayman

As the technology support person for DO-IT, I've been called upon to repair and restore Scholar machines each year. Whereas it used to be accidentally deleted files or virus infections that occupied much of my service time, now I'm mostly removing spyware or wiping and restoring machines because the intrusion of this malware is too great to allow for recovery of the system.

Spyware comes in many guises. Some are relatively benign, merely providing information to outside users so that your web-browsing experience is customized to meet your unique needs. Visitors of the *New York Times* website, for example, can read articles by having a free account. Creating this account deposits a cookie in your web browser so that on return visits to that site, the site knows it is you, sparing you the need to reenter your username/password.

The cookie that is deposited is a small text file that has enough information for their remote servers to know it is you visiting again. If they keep an extensive record of

your visit and surfing habits, then they'll have a great deal of unique, private information about you all linked to that cookie.

You can agree to the deposit of cookies or not via your web browser's preferences settings. You can also pick and choose which cookies to accept or reject. Additionally, you can manually delete individual cookies stored on your computer.

The more pervasive spyware threat comes in the form of web plug-ins and hidden applications. Some of these are installed during visits to particular websites, perhaps as something "required" to view content on a site. Others are installed as part of the installation of another application that the user downloads. Sometimes the End User License Agreement shows somewhere in the fine print that this other application will be installed and is being OK'd by the end user in exchange for use of this so-called free application. Worse yet, some applications purporting to be spyware removal software actually install what they are expected to remove—spyware.

Each of the thousands of known spyware has its own unique activity and threat level. Some may hijack the web browser's home and search pages, redirecting the user toward a target site. Others can go as far as installing backdoor entrances for intrusion, logging keystrokes to capture passwords and private information such as credit card numbers, and then sending that information to a remote computer without your knowledge or permission.

Once spyware "infects" a computer, it can be difficult to impossible to remove. Imagine accidentally spilling some pepper in your salt shaker and shaking it up before you've discovered your mistake. Picking through the salt grain by grain to remove the foreign substance is tedious and time-consuming. Likewise, once spyware has

entered your computer, the removal process can be so difficult that it is easier to wipe the system. More than once in the past year, my tech coworker has seen me painstakingly sifting through the "salt" attempting to remove the "pepper" and said to me, "Wipe and restore it." And often that has been the end solution met with an "I told you so."

Users need to take a two-pronged response to dealing with spyware. First is prevention: not allowing it into your computer in the first place. Second is using removal tools to clean up the machine.

The use of peer-to-peer network file sharing is highly risky. Many of the shared files moving between users are illegal copies of another's audio/visual content. There is an inherent risk in opening these unknown files and in giving others access to drives on your machine.

Free applications, which are popular, get installed without much scrutiny regarding the implications of doing so. Many users want the instant gratification of using what their peers are playing with and don't take the time to investigate spyware that may be associated with these applications.

Before downloading and installing any new application, use your favorite search engine and see if the application has been implicated as an intrusion vector for spyware. Put the name of the application and the word *spyware* into the search text box and see if you get hits indicating a connection.

Once you've been infected with spyware, there are a couple of programs that are mentioned again and again by those writing about ridding your machine of the spyware threat. They are Ad-Aware (<http://www.lavasoftusa.com/software/adaware/>) and Spybot Search & Destroy (<http://www.safer-networking.org/en/index.html>).

With each of these spyware removal tools there is an update function to ensure that the tool can remove the latest threats. Each may also require repeated runs to remove all of the infection, often doing so as a process that loads upon a restart of Windows™.

## **The Thread – How Do People Treat You?**

by Sheryl Burgstahler, DO-IT Director

A DO-IT Pal recently posed the following question in our Internet discussion forum. I will share with you some of the responses so that you can get a flavor of the rich conversations the DO-IT community has online.

**I have been thinking lately about how society treats disabled people: It seems like they tend to back away from anyone abnormal. I have teenage high school buddies with disabilities and they don't really have a social life there. So I'm asking if society has ignored any of you? Have you experienced discrimination?**

**DO-IT Mentor:** *Yes, I have. Mostly in employment situations but also in terms of how I see us portrayed in the media and how we are regarded in society. The thing is that this is a very complex issue. People are employment-ignorant more than mean, and they are simply uncomfortable with anyone who is very different from themselves. We have a responsibility, too, to insist we be included. Most of the time this just means showing up.*

*I would ask, why do your buddies not get involved in school life? What specifically are they not part of? Do they hold back, or are they actively barred from participating? If the latter, by whom?*

**DO-IT Pal:** *My friends are just shy, I guess. I mean, one friend had friends but they deserted her, and another friend is too shy to approach anybody. I can understand why she's scared, too. She wants to be accepted but at the same time not freak anybody out. It's weird.*

**DO-IT Mentor:** *High schoolers can be very odd*

*creatures. Very often, the goal is to blend in or have a group to fit in with. It sounds like you may be more outgoing than some of your friends with disabilities. It may be that they have been excluded before or do not like the same people as you. They might not be as outspoken as you. Whatever. It seems to me, the best thing you could do is continue to be a friend to your other friends with disabilities, and maybe introduce them to some of your other friends. Maybe others will learn from your example. For the record, I DO NOT think your friend is at all weird. High school is one of the most difficult places to be different in any way. College is better for a lot of people in that regard.*

*As far as experiencing discrimination, I definitely have seen it—in school, college, and work experiences. I think it is a societal problem, but not one that laws and social programs alone will fix. I think that depends on changing people's perceptions, those of people with disabilities and able-bodied as well. For me, it BEGINS with showing up but is much more complicated than that.*

**DO-IT Pal:** *Very nice response. We are odd creatures indeed. Sometimes I wish society could be more accessible to disabled people. I mean, it doesn't just happen to disabled people; I have a foreign exchange student friend of mine from Germany and just two days ago I saw somebody trip her intentionally in the hall. I was ready to just get out of there and go straight to the United Nations and complain, but I didn't. In response to the other question, I haven't experienced discrimination myself. I am outgoing, and I am accepted at my school. It's my friends I worry about. Any suggestions?*

**DO-IT Pal:** *You accept your friends, right? I think that's enough. At least they found someone who does accept them.... As for the others who kind of avoid your friends, that's their problem, not your friends'. They can't help having a disability; if you accept them and let your other friends know you do, then that would probably make them feel more comfortable around them. Then again, maybe your friends aren't being discriminated against, maybe they don't have many friends at school*

*because they are shy.... I found that in elementary school, I was made fun of because I was not comfortable being myself.... I really thought of myself as a different person, but from middle school to high school, I feel so much better about myself and no one makes fun of me. I don't look at myself as different—I'm the same as anybody, I just walk differently.*

**DO-IT Mentor:** *One of your comments really stood out to me, which was "I found that in elementary school, I was made fun of because I was not comfortable being myself.... I really thought of myself as a different person, but from middle school to high school, I feel so much better about myself and no one makes fun of me." I just wanted to share with you and others on the list some of our observations from the DO-IT side.*

*Yes, being comfortable with ourselves is important and it does make a difference in the way people treat us. There are other factors at work, too. As our DO-IT friends transition through junior high to high school to college to careers, there seems to be more acceptance as they go along.*

*If it felt great going from junior high to high school because people were more mature and accepting, just wait until you take a class at a community college or a university! The same thing happens again: you realize that in the new environment, people are more interested in different kinds of people and more likely to see diversity as a strength rather than something to make fun of.*

**DO-IT Mentor:** *It is nice that you are concerned for your friends. My only suggestion would be to try to include your friends with disabilities in conversations and activities whenever you can. Maybe if all your friends get to know each other a bit through you, they will be more open about being friendly to each other. You might also let them know that poor behavior is not something you will tolerate in your friends. Of course, this means you have to speak up at some point, leave the offensive situation, or risk being labeled somehow yourself. Sometimes you have to decide which group to be part of and when to keep your mouth shut. It is*

*also important to consider what your more shy friends would want. Do they appreciate your sticking up for them? Or are they embarrassed by it? The only way to know this is to ASK them. If this seems weird to you, you might say something like "It really bugs me when I see THIS happen. I've noticed that you don't say much about it. Can I help?" That way, you let them know you see the situation and can share your reaction, but you can also get their reaction before just jumping in to fix things.*

*Of course, between the way I was raised and my training as an OT, I tend to think people have to learn to fight their own battles some of the time too, which means sometimes letting people solve their own problems—even if it is difficult to watch. You can be a good friend at the same time.*

**DO-IT Pal:** *Wow, that's definitely a big issue. Anyone who looks or acts different could get made fun of. I am in a wheelchair and have Spina Bifida. When I was in elementary school, I was made fun of A LOT; I would go home and cry every day. Now I'm in high school and I don't get made fun of, but it seems that a lot of people treat me differently. I hate it. What bugs me the most is when there is something I want to do which involves being active and the teacher or adult would say, "Are you sure you can do this?" An example is when I was in class, which is called Service Learning, and we were helping out with a Halloween haunted house. I was able to do a lot of things, but when it came to the tough stuff like climbing ladders, I wouldn't have anything to do, and I would sit there and the teacher would see me doing nothing; I guess she got the impression that I can't do anything. And another day, she sent me to the office to do my homework while the other kids helped out. I was so angry.*

*Discrimination happens all the time. To people in chairs, the deaf, the blind, the mentally ill, autistic... everything. People tend to look at the things you aren't able to do and discriminate against you for that, but it takes A LOT to get them to notice what you really can do. You have to work hard at that. It's not easy, but in the end it's worthwhile*



*because you become a stronger person and people do realize that we have plenty to offer. We have a disability, but we are able in plenty of things.*

**DO-IT Mentor:** *For what it's worth, I totally agree. During my time at the U-Dub I saw myself as someone different, and for the most part it only served to keep me isolated. I made only a few briefly- engaged, transient friends during that whole time. I wish I had known better then, but I didn't... so there you are. Still, in one respect, I am different in the sense that we are—each of us—a minority of one, and by “us” I mean ALL people. And it is that intrinsic minority status which bears exploring in each other, which bears understanding and appreciation.*

**DO-IT Ambassador:** *Of course there are always jerks, but I think a lot of the recoil I've got has been out of fear or inexperience. It's maddening, but one time someone started the idea that disabled people are either breakable or really oversensitive, or jerks who use their disability to take advantage. It's of course untrue, but a lot of people believe it. I would really like to get my hands on whoever started it!*

**DO-IT Ambassador:** *I didn't become disabled until eighth grade. I had a ton of friends before, and people were calling me every day. I was a popular guy. After my injury, in high school, my friends pretty much just dropped away because most high school kids are not mature; they are very shallow and superficial. I cannot even remember the last time I got a phone call from one of my friends.*

*People in college are somewhat more mature; I have a few friends, but girls pretty much just blow me off without even trying to get to know me or anything. They just write me off because they see me as disabled. I mean, listen to what one girl said to me: I asked her if maybe we could get together sometime and do something, and her reply was “I am booked the rest of the school year.”*

**DO-IT Mentor:** *That is rough. I am sure it is*

*hard to deal with an acquired disability at any age, but probably worse as a teen than other times. It might have been that your friends did not know how to include you in old activities or perceived a change in your attitude as you were adjusting to your new situation. You were probably going through a lot of emotions and may not have been too pleasant to hang around with. That is understandable. I know I was not pleasant to be with in high school, and it was worse whenever I was dealing with a change in my functional status. I did not share a lot of this with my peers because none of the kids I went to high school with was in a similar situation. What I did instead was seek out other people I could talk to about disability-related issues so I had a place to vent and figure out what was really important to me.*

*I have several disabilities that have changed over time, and I know I routinely have to educate people (sometimes even people I have known for a long time or some I think ought to have figured it out by now) about what I can do and what I would like help with. I know whenever I show up in my wheelchair instead of using my crutches, people ask me what happened. Then I just have to smile and say, “I am using a wheelchair today so I could be the shopping cart,” or something a bit less witty if I am having an off day.*

*One suggestion is when you meet people, try to find a common interest or a strength you can share before meeting a person. Say you meet a person in a math class and you are a math whiz. If there is a test coming up, it is easier to say, “Can we study?” than just to start a conversation like “Do you want to go out sometime?” (It is harder for people to say no once they like you as the smart guy, the funny one, or whatever.) If you have something to share, then people will have something to talk about besides all the stuff they think you cannot do before they even talk with you because you look different or cannot move well—because people do make assumptions. It might also help if people knew what kinds of things you liked and needed help with, which you would have to let them know. Then people might be more able to make plans with you.*

**DO-IT Ambassador:** *Thanks for the advice, but those are things I am already doing or have already tried. My social problems in high school were not caused by me acting a certain way; I was nice to everyone. It's just that they didn't know how to interact with me or what to say, so they just ignored me instead.*

**DO-IT Mentor:** *I do understand. In general, I would say that nondisabled people are well meaning but nervous around people with disabilities. The one exception is teens. It's a time in one's life where one is struggling to see one's place among peers. Often this translates into making sharp distinctions in one's own favor. That is, if you can put someone down, that elevates you in the eyes of those you see as the elite. Or so one thinks. I was not aware of my disability as a teen but was an out kid for other reasons... mostly economic. It could get really cruel. Graduation was one of the happiest days in my life. College was a completely different experience. Adulthood is even better. The older I get, the better it gets in that regard.*

*I think it may be part of the enculturation of all peoples to reject the unfamiliar, including people. That is a very sad state of affairs, and I believe it is every individual's responsibility to refuse to cooperate with that enculturation.*

### **The Browser: Calendar of Events**

*For a schedule of conferences of interest to our readers, go to  
<http://www.washington.edu/doi/Newsletters/calendar.html>*

**SUPPORT DO-IT: How Can You DO-IT?**

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For more information or to request materials in an alternate format, contact  
*doit@u.washington.edu*  
<http://www.washington.edu/doit/>  
 206-221-4171 (FAX)  
 206-685-DOIT (3648) (voice/TTY)  
 888-972-DOIT (3648) (voice/TTY) WA, outside Seattle  
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**DO-IT**  
**University of Washington**  
**Box 355670**  
**Seattle, WA 98195-5670**