

OK, how I got involved in CIL. I first heard about CIL on a programme on KPFA, which is our FM sort of radical underground radio station, Bay area. I heard about this place and I went to one of their meetings, and at that time they had a two bedroom apartment on Hayes Street, near the university. They were an outgrowth of the physically disabled students programme on the University of California Campus. They were just getting started because some of the university students, disabled students, were finding themselves ready to graduate and they did not know what was going to become of them out in the community, so they thought they would start a comparable organisation to the one for physically disabled students, out in the community

JE: What year was that

About 1972, and they were in this two bedroomed apartment, about 10 people, the nucleus of the organisation, and the first money they got was a \$5,000 grant, and I kept calling them up and saying, I'm available to work, and they would say well we don't have anything yet to pay anybody with, but I finally did get a job with them, as a medical door, going in for medical service, for wheelchair repairing. I first came to work here in 1974, so they had been going already two years, and I was a medical doer, and a transportation despatcher, we had one van at that time, which I would schedule, one van and one driver. Pretty soon I discovered I could not schedule the van and take phone calls and complaints and all the stuff I had to take, and also do the billing, so the billing was given over to somebody else, and I have never worked here full time, but I spent the time that I was here doing the van schedule, and I did that for a couple of years, and I became a counsellor. We had a federal grant for three years to study the efficacy of the peer counselling model, disabled people counselling other disabled people. We have always known it was a good idea, because other disabled people can't run the usual poor me games, and we as counsellors can have more credibility. We thought it was a pretty effective model, but the feds wanted us to find out for sure, so it was a three year project that went on for a fourth year, and then when that was finished, I came to work here in the intake department, and I have been here ever since. I think I started here in 1979. So I have worked for the same organisation all this time

JE: In the early days when you first got involved with the PDSP, that was with Ed Roberts, Phil Draper, John Hessler

I was never part of PDSP because I, but those were the folks, yes

JE: You were one of the link people really with the change over from the student set up, to the more community orientated set up

I guess you could say that, except that it was a couple of years before they were able to hire me. I was just kind of hanging around on the fringes for a while

JE: Could you tell me a bit about intake

We cover a lot of different areas, it is not only taking case histories on people, that is specifically what we do, but

JE: When people first phone up with a problem, this is one of the first places they contact

Yes, this is the first place that we get information about them, but in addition to getting information about would-be clients, we do an awful lot of information giving, like the person I have just been talking to is an old client of mine who I have not heard from in 2 or 3 years, she was supposed to call me back last week and she never did, so she catches me now, she wanted me to give her an answer on a silver platter, whether her doctor was any good or not, well she has got to figure that out herself, so anyway, I give advice to people who are stuck in some place, I give information, people like you who are studying, trying to figure out what it is about, and

then a lot of people just walk in off the street and say do something for me. What else, I have even done tours, people wanting to see the place

JE: Once people have got in touch with you, you start a file, where does it go from here

We keep an original copy of their intake and we make as many copies as are needed to go to the various departments

JE: So there is not one source for everything

No, we are the hub of the wheel, the spokes go out in all directions. We are supposed to do follow up too, which is harder because you can see it is hard to follow up when you are already being besieged

2 INTAKE

JE: How many of you are working here

There's Sandy and myself, she is three quarters time and I am half time, and then we have Aleho, who is here ten hours a week, so all of our hours together only add up to one and a half people, it is not really satisfactory

JE: Have you been affected by the cut backs

We are just beginning to be. Before the Reganomics we are still feeling the effects of . Three or four years ago, a local politician named Jarvis, he is a real estate man, estate agent, also in the state legislator. He was hearing from his constituents, the wealthier ones, that they are unhappy with the tax burden in this state, so he put through this measure, it passed on the ballot. It did not pass in San Francisco, it passed in the rest of the state. Drastic property tax cuts, and of course the property taxes are what support all the services, so for the first little while it was not so bad because the state had surplus money, but now the state is feeling the pinch, as if it weren't bad enough already, then old came along and whatever money the state had has been spent. Have you heard of Mag fly, it is a and fruit fly, they are stopping fruit coming and going and they have been spraying like crazy

JE: When did that start happening

A month or so ago. So the state is in no position to bail anybody out, and then when the Reganomics really hits, then I don't know what is going to happen. It would be really tough for this place to be shut down

JE: It seems like in the IYPD, every country is cutting back on their social services

We saw advertisements for the Cheshire Homes, we are not crazy about the idea. They look just terribly paternalistic

JE: What were you doing before you got involved with CIL

For a long time I was married and raising children, then I had a chance to become a taxi despatcher from home, at that point it was an advantage not to have to leave home, I still had young children. Then, they couldn't hear me very well from where I was, so I went to their office. Then that job fell through, they lost their insurance because they acted as an informal ambulance service for people who were hurt in the People's Part Riots, so I became unemployed, and I found out I made as much out of unemployment as I did working for them. In those days I wasn't even on benefits because I was married, I had my husbands income to keep me. You might say Taxi Unlimited raised my consciousness, because I was not very politically aware up to that point. They were very poorly paid and in the drug culture and everything else, so for a middle class, middle aged housewife it was quite a turn around. Then I had another job in between that job and CIL, I guess I have been here longer than anybody except Phil Draper. People come and go

here at a rapid rate, there is not an awful lot of job security, grnts come and go, money comes and goes and people come and go with the money. I am a stay put sort of person. It is the first job I ever had in my life that I got because of who I was and not in spite of who I was, and that feels really good

JE: Are you happy with the way you have seen CIL develop

We grew too fast, now we are paying the price for it. There's good reasons why we grew too fast. Every time you want money to do a certain study or whatever it has got to be new, innovative, something that has never been done before, like when you write your PhD thesis, it has got to be brand new. So every time we heard of money anything to do with disabled people, we would go for it, and it meant expanding in all sorts of funny kinds of ways, it is like a tree that is growing with no particular control, it is all wild and woolly and crazy, and the money would come in and we would hire a bunch of people, then the money would quit, so the growth was not planned

JE: Difficult to maintain organisational integrity - small is beautiful

U We should have stayed small

JE: This is what I have heard outside, people feel this place had got too big and impersonal

It is fragmented. There are 150 to 200 people working here. We used to know each other. We are down to about 100 now, but when I first knew them they had 10. You can't do much of a job with 10 people, but at least when you need to know something you can communicate easily, now one of our great failings is lack of communication

ORGANISATION
CUTS

JE: Who makes decisions about new directions, new programmes

It comes from the administration basically, like they wrote a grant and we got money to work with mentally retarded and we did not know until the programme was upon us, and we did not have any experience, and we felt very betrayed. One aspect of CIL runs out and gets the money, but it is the service provider that has to work with it

U JE: So who is the administration

Board of directors consists of the director and then various deputies, it is getting top heavy with deputy directors

JE: What is the ratio of disabled to non disabled

About 50,50 and there are some people that are very unhappy with that. I personally would rather have this and be more like the world we live in

JE: I suppose there is a danger in the future that you never know who is going to be in the key decision making positions, this is a worry with nondisabled

We might get back to the old model which we are trying to get away from, non disabled telling us what we should be doing

JE: Do you see how to counteract that

I think it is happening in spite of us now, we are being chopped down. It hurts a lot of people, we get more fragmented than ever, but life has a way of seeking a balance, it may be something we have to go through. I just hope we can survive it, because if you prune this poor tree too much it can't survive

JE: How do you motivate disabled people

END