

continued from page 1 – Olympia wrap-up of legislative session

and voted down the amendments, keeping the closure of Yakima in the Senate budget.

Most of the developmental disabilities programs and services will likely lose some funding. But the majority will not be eliminated. The exception to that is Parent to Parent and self advocacy groups.

This legislative session had more self advocates than ever before. 700 attended the rally on the Capitol steps.

Though we may not make any real gains and will sustain some hits, it could have been worse if the voices of our self advocates had not been heard.

continued from page 2 – Self advocates; democracy in action

We are here, we are real, and we are a force to be reckoned with.

At the end of the day, each self-advocate was asked what this experience had meant to him or her.

“I want people to get out in the community and have their own houses and do fun stuff like us,” Doug.

Nina voiced her concern, “We learned how they’re cutting money for people who have disabilities who live with their parents and have caregivers. I would be very upset if my caregiver couldn’t do anything with me anymore,” she said

Kim spoke about the need to be a voice not

only for herself but others

“I learned that being a self-advocate is very, very urgently important because if we don’t go out and stand up for our rights, who will? Not only am I speaking for myself, I’m speaking for those who cannot speak.” she said.

Violet Snodgrass enjoyed being together. “I liked talking to people. They were very nice.”

Being an advocate met several needs for Merry Wench. “I learned a little more about waivers, which things are covered and not covered. I enjoyed giving out information to the legislative aides.”

Report by Tracy Wilson

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