“Lives Worth Living” Documentary Influential at Community Celebration

Colorado Springs, Colo. – The Independence Center celebrated the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and how it has affected the lives on those with disabilities on July 25th at Stargazers Theatre. The ADA Celebration included a silent auction with items donated from around the community, a screening of the PBS documentary “*Lives Worth Living”* and local heroes involved in the Disability Rights movement sharing their stories.

“This was a community building event and I appreciate all of our hard work together to create this community,” CEO of The Independence Center, Patricia Yeager said.

"*Lives Worth Living*," which depicts the history of the Disability Rights Movement to the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was screened at the event. Following the inspirational film, some participants involved in the movement share their stories.

“During the movie, you could hear a pin drop,” Yeager said. “I think maybe people did not realize what a recent and rich history we have across the country.  We are not alone!”

While the silent auction was successful, the movie and speakers stole the show. The speakers, all local participants in the Disability Rights Movement, shared their experiences and struggles during the time the ADA was being fought for. Anita Pope, one of the speakers of the night, shared her thoughts on how the event went.

“I think it was really good for people to see this movie, because the people that are out in the community now that have access that wasn’t available back then. Especially younger people know, they have no idea what it was like and they are enjoying the fruits of those people’s labors. I tell my kids stories all the time and they can’t believe how much has changed,” Pope said.

The three speakers highlighted experiences shared in the film. Matthew Ruggles recounted walking in the Deaf President Now Marches and the power of seeing someone who was Deaf elected to lead Gallaudet University. Pope commented on ADAPT’s work in Colorado Springs and in larger marches in San Francisco. Billy Allen, who is the 504 Coordinator for Memorial Health System, spoke about what still needs to be done within the ADA to make it truly benefit people with disabilities.

“It’s really good for people to see the hard work that the disability community had to go through to make things as good as they are right now. It might not be perfect, but it’s so much better,” Pope said.

For more information about The Independence Center, visit our website at www.theindependencecenter.org.