

ADAPT PICKS NEW TARGETS

AND OFF THEY GO

article and photos by Tim Wheat

“We haven’t been able to get in the front door at the Republican National Committee,” says ADAPT activist John Donnelly of New York, “for five long years.”

With the launch of ADAPT’s “No More Excuses!” campaign in September, however, activists flooded into the RNC’s headquarters — to make sure MiCASSA stays on the GOP radar.

MiCASSA was first introduced in Congress nearly ten years ago by Republican Newt Gingrich — under heavy pressure from ADAPT. MiCASSA has been ADAPT’s primary focus since 1995, but now “No More Excuses” widens that focus.

ADAPT’s success with the 2006 passage of the Money Follows the Person Act, a bill that grew out of MiCASSA, brought about a change in strategy: ADAPT added Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) as targets, creating



DAWN RUSSELL LED CHANTS, ANITA CAMERON SANG, AND JOHNNY CRESCENDO PERFORMED HIS NEW SONG, “DON’T LOCK US IN.”

a plan called Access Across America to help people move out of expensive and undesirable institutions.

Although ADAPT moved the spotlight to PHAs, the group continued to hold the HUD’s feet to the fire at the September action, demanding that Housing Secretary Alphonso Jackson live up to his commitments.

The “No More Excuses!” campaign also targets Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). ADAPT demands that future changes to long-term Medicaid services acknowl-

edge the ADA and the 1999 Olmstead Supreme Court decision.

Karen Ignagni, who heads the national group representing MCOs, agreed in September to meet with ADAPT so that MCOs adopt a philosophy of community first, equality, personal choice, and independent living.

The success of Money Follows the Person did not diminish activists’ drive for MiCASSA. Randy Alexander of ADAPT Memphis calls MiCASSA “the next logical step.” He notes that MFP helps people get out of institutions, but our community will not have equality until people with disabilities aren’t forced into institutions in the first place.

“We have to change institutional bias,” Alexander says, “into live-in-the-community bias.” ■



MIKE EAKIN OF PENNSYLVANIA LEADS ONE SEPTEMBER MARCH