

# *“Intolerance of Intolerance” Diversity Awareness Corner*



## *Beyond This Place... There Be Dragons!*

July 2005



### **DIVERSITY & DISABILITY?**

In Fayette County Pennsylvania, state police said Mark Downs, Jr., 27, offered his star player \$25 on June 27, 2005 to hit an 8-year-old autistic child with a baseball because he wanted to win the game.

“Just when you thought you had seen everything,” said state Trooper Thomas B. Broadwater.

Police said Downs asked player Keith Reese (age 7) to hurt Harry Bowers (age 8), who is autistic. Reese threw a ball that hit Bowers in the left ear while they were warming up before a game. After Bowers didn't go down, Reese hit the child in the groin with the ball, police said.

When Bowers ran to tell the coach about the attack, Downs suggested that he sit out the game, police said.

When Jennifer Bowers, the boy's mother, confronted Reese about the deliberate throws, Reese told her the coach had asked him to hurt Bowers, police said. The boy was taken to an emergency room, where he was treated for swollen red marks on his ear and groin.

State police said Ms. Bowers signed up her son for tee ball hoping it would help him overcome some of the social stigma he might face in the future.

Downs and Bowers' mother have clashed in the past about her son's playing time, police said. The R.W. Clark Youth Baseball League requires that each player get at least three innings in each game.

## **Do We Raise Our Children To Be Bigots?**

The Disabled are the **MOST** discriminated group in America:

**68-70%** of all the disabled persons in America who are of working age and could work with some reasonable accommodation **ARE UNEMPLOYED...**

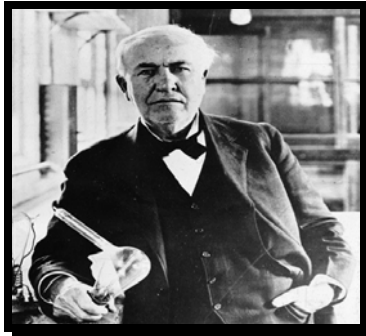
***AND MOST ACCOMMODATIONS COST LESS THAN \$50!***

The Only **REAL** Disability We Have Is Our Attitude.

If We Are All Bigots...Then None Of Us Are.

### **Discussion Questions**

- How did you react to this story?
- What would you do if you saw something like this happen...**KNOWING** that the vast majority of us are **RETREATERS**? (**REMEMBER:** We got Nazi Germany because the “good people” of the world just retreated...they sat by and did nothing.)
- If you stand by and let this happen ... aren't you just as bad as ordering the “hit”?
- How many disabled individuals do **YOU** work with?
- Do you work with any “odd” people...people who are different from you?
- How do **YOU** treat people who are different, like Harry Bowers?
- Was Harry injured more physically or emotionally?
- Isn't excluding (objectifying) people like Harry the same as “beating” them with a ball?



### **“Odd People” Grow Up And Invent Light Bulbs**

*Thomas Edison: Learning Disability and Asperger's (Type of Autism)*

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