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U of M Dearborn Student Celebrates March as Disability Awareness Month!

Dearborn, MI – March 10, 2010 – She’s written a constitution, become president of a campus committee, created web sites, challenged her college professor and won an award for her outstanding advocacy efforts and she’s only 20 years old! Dearborn resident and U of M Dearborn student Rebecca Parten is definitely on the path to an exciting future!



“I like to get stuff done and when my professor wouldn’t help me find a note taker during my first year on campus, I took matters into my own hands, stood up in my wheelchair and asked someone to help me,” said Parten. “Not only did I get a note taker, I made some friends too!”

Parten is now a junior and things haven’t slowed down much. She is the President and Founder of the Alliance for Disability Awareness (<http://alliance.umd.umich.edu>) which she established to provide educational and social opportunities for students with disabilities and increase awareness on campus about focusing on people’s abilities. She also just found out that she has been named one of the school’s **50 Difference Makers** in honor of the school’s 50th anniversary (<http://www.umd.umich.edu/differencemakers/>).

“I started the group because none of the other offerings on campus caught my eye,” said Parten. “I thought it would be fun to start a group, plan activities and get to know people. We’ve had a few events and fundraisers and we’re planning some other fun things this year too.”

Rebecca is very busy and very independent and has a rather unique situation. Instead of hiring staff to help her when she needs it, she hired her dad! He serves as her staff person, whenever she needs help or has to go somewhere. “In the beginning it was kind of weird knowing my dad was working for me and getting paid but it’s fine now. He takes me where I need to go and helps when I need it. I’d rather it be him than a stranger. It’s kind of cool!”

Rebecca is supported by services through Community Living Services. CLS Inc. is a non-profit organization that serves more than 3,000 children and adults in Wayne County. CLS is funded through the Detroit-Wayne County Community Mental Health Agency. For more information, visit our web site at www.comlivserv.com

