



Using Interdependence

by Micah Fialka-Feldman

Interdependence simply means depending on each other. Instead of being independent and relying only on yourself, interdependence involves working together to get something done. I first heard about interdependence at a conference. I know I had not heard this term at school or other places. I had the idea that I always had to be independent. I like the idea of interdependence because it means that people can help each other.

I realized that I have actually been practicing interdependence for a while. I first started practicing interdependence when I joined KASA. We use it a lot when we do projects. For example, a Board Member helped me get my PowerPoint presentation ready, and I gave her tips on speaking in front of a group. At our face-to-face meetings, I may carry something for one of my friends, and he or she may help me take notes or answer my questions when I don't understand something.

I also practiced interdependence during my fight to live in the dorms at Oakland University. Several people helped me in winning my case. For example, my family gave me lots of moral support. They sent me great cards. My sister, who was away at school, even sent me a singing card to give me support. We had meetings with my parents and with my lawyer and me. My dad, professors, and friends helped me find information for my housing case. They wrote letters to the administration, spoke at Board of Trustees Meetings, and wrote affidavit letters. I had to answer a bunch of questions to prepare my case. I also got some great support from the student body at my school.

Now that I live in the dorms, I have another opportunity to practice interdependence. My friends help me with laundry, grocery shopping, preparing meals and other activities. They also help me figure out ways to do the fun stuff I want to do. When they help me with my homework, I may help them by listening as they read their papers. I also help them by giving them feedback. I help my friends by teaching them that I am like anyone else that is a student at Oakland University. I am the same as any other student. I might do some things differently, but I do some things the same as any other student. I teach my friends about disability history and disability pride. As a result, many of them come to the Disability Pride Parade, which takes place each year in Chicago.



I do believe that interdependence works. It shows people that they don't have to be independent all the time. People should practice interdependence because they can ask for help when they need help. They can also meet more people and have fun!

Read more about how Micah went to college and his advocacy to live in the dorms at:

<http://fvkasa.org/resources/files/ed-breakingdownbarriers.php>

<http://fvkasa.org/resources/files/ed-micahcollege.php>

<http://www.throughthesamedoor.com/>