

## President's Insights November 2025



International  
Day of  
Persons with  
Disabilities

3 DECEMBER

### December 3 is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities\*.

Let's consider two patient encounters I had this week as an Optometrist performing eye examinations in two Nursing Facilities. Both experiences moved and inspired me.

#### Patient "Greg"

Greg is a 67-year-old patient with Down Syndrome who sparks joy in those he encounters. He walks around all day fully dressed for a day in the office -shirt, trousers, and two briefcases, one in each hand. When he arrived for his eye examination, his -6.00 glasses were in one of his briefcases, bent and twisted.

Once I carefully adjusted the glasses to fit him properly, Greg kept them on! At first, he was a little hesitant to work with me, but the kindness of the staff member who brought him to me, talking to him as a friend, made all the difference.

When I finish my day seeing patients, I normally discuss the residents' insurance details with the business office- a task that is "not always fun". However, this time, I was nearly brought to tears when she told me that "Greg" joins the staff each day for their morning meetings. He sits in on the meetings, briefcases and all.

Greg must be a light in the staff's day. What a beautiful example of acceptance for all of us.

#### Patient "Max"

Pleasant and engaging, Max wheels into the room in his quadriplegic wheelchair which he controls with his chin and head. I often see him sitting outside, enjoying the sun with his shades on, talking with other residents and greeting others who come through the entrance area. Max has been my patient for 10 years.

At the start of his eye examination, "Max" asked how my day was going so far. Max is caring and considerate. He didn't do well with a bifocal, and he relies on having someone put on his near vision glasses for him to use them. It brought to mind another patient years ago who was a high myope. We were able to convince the Lasik surgeon that it would be

possible to get the patient with quadriplegia onto their operating table to perform Lasik. It worked.

As Optometrists, we care for patients with Visual Disabilities, but often our care goes beyond vision, as described by my two encounters.

Let us be open to learning from those who are different. Let us learn from those living a daily struggle with grace and acceptance. Our work can be so inspiring! I consider myself fortunate to be able to do this in both my professional and volunteer work.

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*\*Since 1992, the International Day of Persons with Disabilities has been celebrated on 3 December every year to promote the rights of people with disabilities.*

<https://social.desa.un.org/issues/disability/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-3-december>