

# the Weekly

ww woodinville weekly

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# Community

## A Young man's remarkable journey advocating for disability rights

By Arushi Sharma | Intern



On July 26, 1990, a pivotal moment in American history occurred when the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law, setting a new trajectory for advancing the rights of Americans with disabilities. Amid this progress, the heartwarming story of Andrew Young, an individual with developmental challenges, shines as a beacon of inspiration in our community.

Young's life transformed in 1988 when he found unwavering support at Kindering, a leading not-for-profit neurodevelopmental center in the Northwest. Reflecting on those early days, Andrew's mother, Nancy Young, shares, "We had moved up here when he was just three months old from Southern California. He was just a little guy, and we knew he had a disability that required attention. We found our way to Kindering, then known as Mary Woods school, where Andrew's journey to success truly began."

At Kindering, Young received personalized therapies and early special education, laying a solid foundation for his future accomplishments. Nancy remarks, "Andrew received a multifaceted experience, with classroom time encompassing diverse sensory and communication experiences. Additionally, he benefited from various therapies, including speech, occupational, and gross motor therapy, providing him the best opportunity to develop his skills and embrace new experiences."

Kindering served as an invaluable resource for Young's growth and as a lifeline for his parents.

Curtis, Andrew's father, actively engaged in the father's network, which, while not officially affiliated with Kindering, was based there. Nancy adds, "I, too, received substantial support by connecting with other families and consulting professionals. This ensured that our efforts at home complemented and enriched Andrew's learning opportunities."

One of the significant milestones during Young's time at Kindering was his learning sign language.

"It was toward the end of his time there that we introduced signs, and Andrew's communication just blossomed," Nancy recalls. "Having an outlet for expression through sign language was vital to him and to us as his parents because it allowed him to convey his needs effectively."

Today, residing in a Woodinville independent community home, Young takes immense pride in his identity

as a person with intellectual disabilities. He has not only excelled as a participant in the Special Olympics, showcasing his remarkable talents in basketball and bowling. Still, he has also emerged as a passionate advocate for disability rights in the Greater Seattle Area. He actively organizes community events to foster awareness and unity within the disabled community, profoundly impacting residents' hearts.

Young's desire to be part of the Special Olympics during the COVID pandemic inspired him to take action. Nancy explains, "He contacted people on his own, seeking opportunities on the east side. Although it didn't work out with Redmond Parks & Recreation, we discovered the North Shore Wranglers' inclusion program, which has been a godsend. Andrew now participates in Special Olympics basketball, with practices at Home Court in Woodinville."

Young's sports journey is skillfully coached by Pat

Scott, Co-Founder & CEO of Homecourt, who has become a beloved figure in his life. "Coach Pat is the best! We all love him," Young said.

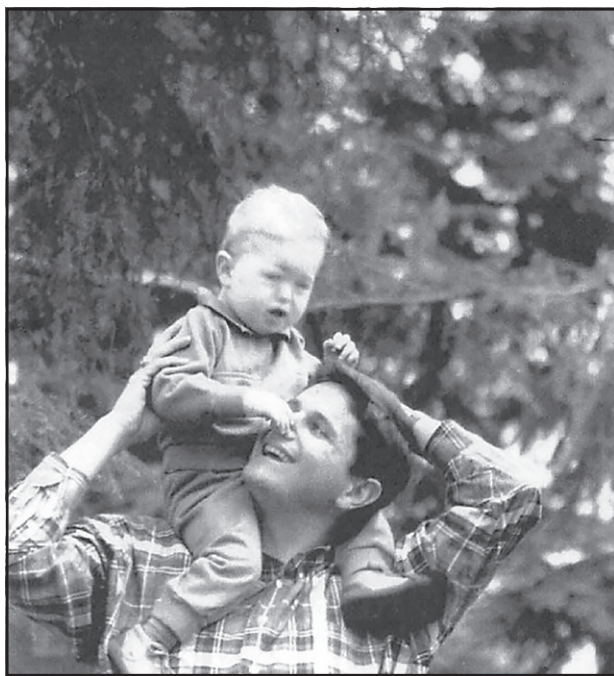
In September, Young will embark on the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities program at the University of Washington. This cohort will include individuals in medical and academic fields and self-advocates like Andrew, who will facilitate positive interactions with people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

Beyond his achievements, Young continues volunteering at Kindering and on a state and national level for the Special Olympics. His unwavering advocacy has brought about a positive transformation, fostering meaningful conversations, and enhancing empathy toward individuals with disabilities.

As Disability Pride Month aligns with the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Young's journey serves as a poignant reminder of the significance of inclusivity and support

for every individual. Nancy emphasizes, "We wish for the broader community to welcome Andrew and all kids with disabilities, providing them with more job opportunities and activities. It goes beyond acceptance to a place of belonging, which makes all the difference in the world."

Young's remarkable achievements and leadership inspire us all, illuminating the path toward a more inclusive and compassionate society. To learn more about Kindering and its mission, please visit <https://kindering.org/>.



Photos provided by Kindering.

**2023**  
**FLY AWAY**  
**5K**

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**9am - 12pm**  
**Log Boom Park/Burke-Gilman Trail**

**FUN COSTUMES ENCOURAGED!**  
**BothellKenmoreChamber.org/events**

**Bothell Kenmore CHAMBER**  
**KENMORE BY THE LAKE**

