



# ReachOut e-Diversity News

An Electronic Publication of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council

## Important Information This Month:

1. Self Driving Cars
2. Ramp Your Voice!
3. An Advocate's Successful Journey
4. Remote Monitoring

June 2017 Edition | Volume 11, Issue 3

Read, Pass on to Friends,  
Family Members, Colleagues  
& Constituents



Don't  
Miss an  
Issue!

It is the policy of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council to use person-first language in items written by staff. Items reprinted or quoted exactly as they originally appear may not reflect this policy.



### The Ruderman White Paper

SELF-DRIVING CARS: THE IMPACT ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



## Self-Driving Car Technologies: The Impact on People with Disabilities

**Self-driving cars** are becoming a staple in today's conversation. In fact, more and more cars have self-driving features installed-like highly advanced auto-pilot modes. Even though there is some highly sophisticated technology on the road, the most sophisticated self-driving car will just

sit behind a moving truck that is parked in the road until the human driver tells it to drive around it. Despite the fact that the technology levels are not yet ripe for fully autonomous vehicles, the advances are ripe for a much needed conversation about the future implementation of this technology once it is fully developed. This conversation must include looking at the impact on people with disabilities. [-READ MORE-](#)



## INTRODUCING Ramp Your Voice!



Through Trimiko Melancon's interview with Vilissa Thompson, founder and CEO of Ramp Your Voice!, this article introduces you to an organization that promotes self-advocacy and empowerment among people with disabilities. The mission of Ramp Your Voice! is simple: be the space where disability issues are discussed from an intersectional, personal lens. Find out about its approaches, impressive work, and advice for supporters.

[-READ MORE-](#)



## Shari - An Advocate's Successful Journey



When Shari Cooper joined the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council in 2004, she didn't realize that her life was about to change. David Zwyer, Executive Director at the time, saw a woman with passion for the people she represented. Zwyer recognized if Shari's passion was channeled into advocacy work, she would become a change agent for people with disabilities. He then seized the chance to

mentor. Through this relationship, Shari learned about advocacy and was provided with opportunities to develop her advocacy knowledge, skills, and engage in advocacy work locally, throughout Ohio, and nationally. Through this article, we invite you to follow Shari's successful journey as an advocate for people with developmental disabilities.

[-READ MORE-](#)



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REVIEW THE FACTS

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## FACTS ABOUT REMOTE MONITORING

Remote Monitoring Service is the use of technology to support a person in their home from a distance. It helps people with disabilities live safely at home without having someone else there and gives them a chance to do more on their own, while remaining healthy and safe.

[-READ MORE-](#)



## Did You Know?

**Hearing Loss is the third most common health problem in the United States. 36 million American suffer from a hearing loss, more than half are younger than 65 years of age.**



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## Self-Driving Car Technologies: The Impact on People with Disabilities

**Self-driving cars** are becoming a staple in today's conversation. In fact, more and more cars have self-driving features installed-like highly advanced auto-pilot modes. Even though there is some highly sophisticated technology on the road, the most sophisticated self-driving car will just sit behind a moving truck that is parked in the road until the human driver tells it to drive around it. Despite the fact that the technology levels are not yet ripe for fully autonomous vehicles, the advances are ripe for a much needed conversation about the future implementation of this technology once it is fully developed. This conversation must include looking at the impact on people with disabilities.



In the United States, approximately one in every five persons, or more than 57 million people, have a disability. **The most recent government transport survey indicated that six million individuals with a disability have difficulty getting the transportation they need.**

Transportation is a key community-based support that **allows individuals to fulfill their civic responsibilities and makes it possible to enjoy one's civil rights.** When a disability limits transportation options, one's disability can result in reduced economic opportunities, isolation that exacerbates medical conditions or leads to depression, and a diminished quality of life.

Mitigating transportation related obstacles for individuals with disabilities would **enable new employment opportunities for approximately 2 million individuals with disabilities, and save \$19 billion annually in healthcare expenditures** from missed medical appointments. This is in the context of the anticipated broader impacts of autonomous vehicles: **\$1.3 trillion in savings from productivity gains, fuel costs, accident prevention,** among other sources.

As new transportation technologies such as on-demand mobility solutions and, in the near future, autonomous vehicles enter the mainstream they offer **potential for reducing transportation obstacles for Americans with disabilities.**

Across the country, autonomous vehicle legislation is being discussed with little attention given to the use of this technology to serve individuals with disabilities.



### LEARN MORE

The Ruderman Family Foundation and [Securing America's Future Energy \(SAFE\)](#) have paired up to produce the [Ruderman White Paper on Self-Driving Car Technologies: The Impact on People with Disabilities](#)



### [View You Tube Video](#)

#### [Are driverless cars in Ohio's future?](#)

Track the status of Governor Kasich's proposed \$45 million investment in the Transportation Research Center- a proposed automotive testing facility northwest of Columbus.



### [Find out about the Smart Belt Coalition](#)

A collaboration among transportation agencies and academic institutions in Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania to establish standards and to make the region more competitive in the industry.



### JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Make sure that 20% of the population are not left out of reaping the benefits of this transformative technology

Organize stakeholders in your community

Share the Ruderman White Paper with stakeholders

Contact Legislators and Technology Developers and reinforce the importance of designing self-driving vehicles with the people with disabilities in mind



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## Ramp Your Voice: An Interview with Vilissa Thompson

By Trimiko Melancon

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**Melancon: What have been some of the obstacles and triumphs in your consciousness-raising efforts and work for justice and equality for people of all abilities?**

**Thompson:** Reshaping the way the Black community views disability in general and how we interact with those of us who are disabled has been a welcome challenge. Our community is considered to be accepting, but we do harbor ideas about disability that stem from the medical and not the social model of disability. Shifting our mindset from a pity framework to one that sees disability as part of the diverse human experience is a priority for me. I am not a tragedy because I am in a wheelchair, nor am I an inspiration because I am living my life. Calling out how toxic views of disability can damage disabled members means that ignorance can no longer be the excuse- if you read my writings and the stories of disabled Black people, you can no longer proclaim that we do not exist. We will not be forced into the back room in family homes anymore; we are out here thriving, surviving, going to school, creating businesses, having families, getting married- doing all the things you do and take for granted. In many ways, these actions are "newfound" freedoms, many given to us legally in stating that we have a right to be integrated and included in our communities. Black disabled people have always been here, and we are not going to be hushed or pushed aside because of your discomfort about our appearances or the ways we engage with the world.



Meeting and befriending other Black disabled women is the lifeline to my work. Being told that my voice matters and that I have given them a voice is humbling. Their affirmations keep me grounded and help me remember who matters- them. No one has my back, front, and side like Black women, and they support me each day. To them, I am indebted, and for them, I give my all.



**Melancon: Ramp Your Voice is simultaneously personal and political, as evidenced transparently in both its scope and services offered. Was this intentional and, if so, why are these approaches so important?**

**Thompson:** Mixing personal and political perspectives was indeed purposeful. I wanted to humanize the disabled experience for those who may be unfamiliar with our specific issues and challenges. Humanizing us weakens the misconceptions, prejudices, and biases about who we are. When you read my writings, I want you to come away knowing how a disabled person lives and thinks and to remove inaccuracies about our value and worth. The best responses I have received are from professionals who stated that my work has impacted how they interact with disabled clients and community members. The blog articles I write and services I offer explore what society thinks disability is and turn those ideas on their head in a direction that is accurate and effective for becoming better allies/supporters.co-conspirators for the community.

On a personal level, this approach has been validating. Creating my blog allowed me to share my thoughts about areas that intersected me (such as politics, sexuality, dating) and give a peek into my struggles with

juggling multiple identities. Sharing my anger, pains, and joys in embracing being a woman who is Black, physically disabled, a wheelchair user, a little woman, and hard of hearing and finding space and community in the process were unexpected occurrences that strengthened my presence and advocacy.

**Melancon:** How can folks get involved as supporters? What advice would you have for allies with regards to the fight to dismantle barriers for people with disabilities?

**Thompson:** Allies/supporters/co-conspirators need to check their own privileges, biases, and prejudices when it comes to disability. You cannot join forces with us without undoing and unlearning the ableist ideas about disability that permeate our culture and society. Not doing this work will cause you to create harm towards us; it is simply irresponsible to not first gauge your understanding of disability and possible problematic frameworks before you try to align yourselves to our movement.

Once you take ownership of those problematic views, you must take the key step that allies consistently fail to do- listen to disabled people. You cannot call yourself allies if you do not listen to the people you seek to support. Disabled people are the experts of this human experience- not parents, teachers, caregivers, or professionals. We have a right culture and



**Vilissa Thompson** is founder and CEO of Ramp Your Voice! She is a licensed Master Social Worker from Winnsboro, SC. As a disability rights consultant, writer, and advocate, Thompson is a prominent leader and expert in addressing and educating the public and political figures about the plight of people with disabilities.

history that have value and deserve to be respected and learned, as with any group. We are not a monolith- we are diverse by disability types, but that diversity is greatly influenced by our other identities as well. Most importantly, as an ally, learn when it is appropriate to step up and when it is important to be in the background. In other words, “stay in your lane.” Know where that is and tread accordingly.



**Trimiko Melancon** is an associate professor of English, African American Studies, and Women’s Studies at Loyola University New Orleans. She is the award-winning author of *Unbought and Unbossed: Transgressive Black Women, Sexuality, and representation*. Her writings also appear in *African American Review*, *Journal of Popular Culture*, *Huffington Post*, *Ms. Magazine*. Follow her on Twitter@trimikomelancon.

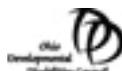
There is so much work to be done to ensure that systemic barriers are eliminated and that the largest minority group in the U.S. and globally has access to the support, services, and opportunities we deserve and have rights to possess. Listen when we tell you what roles we need you to take to tackle barriers and obstacles that stymie our ability to merely exist, be valued, and live. You will never be successful if we are not involved in every aspect of your efforts.

*Reprinted from African American Intellectual Historical Society (AAIHS) March 18, 2017*

**BLACK PERSPECTIVES** [Read the Full Interview Here](#)



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## Shari- An Advocate's Successful Journey

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"Who would have ever thought the girl with a speech impairment would be good at communicating to the public!" Yes, I ask myself this question a lot; yet I am now that girl/ woman.

I can manage to bring my nerves to a halt when speaking to any crowd, despite how large, without passing out. What makes things even better, the crowd actually understands me. And because of this gift which I received from a much higher power, that sits high and looks low, I am speaking and presenting throughout the great state of Ohio.

What an exciting growth journey I have been on since 2004. I applied and was elected to serve as a member of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (ODDC). While on ODDC, I witnessed from my peers what true disability advocacy leadership means. I was eager for the opportunity to chair one of Council's committees. When I was tapped for Leadership, I took off.



**Shari Cooper** is a Sinclair Community College graduate and currently works as the Community and Staff Relations Associate at Goodwill Easter Seals Miami Valley.

My take off process was noticed and for it, I was asked by the former Executive Director of ODDC, if I would like to be mentored to serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD). Although I doubted whether I was ready for such a huge opportunity, I jumped at the chance. Sometimes you have to take a leap of faith in order to make things happen. This too worked out. Not only did I become a member but was soon elected as Vice Chair to NACDD. My time on that council enhanced my advocacy journey to the fullest.



**NACDD**  
National Association of Council  
on Developmental Disabilities



When my council journey ended, I thought I would put my passion to good use by joining the Ohio Governor's Council on People with Disabilities and Advocacy Protective Services Inc. By this time others in the field and community were starting to take notice of my abilities.

I was then tapped to emcee the Developmental Disability Advocacy and Awareness Day where I'm sure there were many naysayers due to my speech impairment. Naysayers, serve me one purpose, to make them believers. Let's just say, my job as emcee worked out pretty-darned well. I just finished emceeing this event for the fourth consecutive time. Life proceeded along and so did my advocacy journey with a huge presentation to the LEND program at Ohio State University which I have done now for the past three years.

In 2015, a great co-worker suggested that I try out for TedxDayton. Again, another successful adventure. My Ted Talk title “Are You OK with yourself?” went amazingly well and has been viewed more than 1800 times. Since one of my primary job functions at my employer of 15yrs Goodwill Easter Seals Miami Valley is blogging and I have a great following, the same great co-worker suggested that I submit to be a community contributor for the Dayton Daily News. And yes, I was chosen and now I’m a regular contributor for the paper writing about things that impact people with disabilities



To date, I have been on my journey advocating and presenting all over the country. I just finished giving two presentations on advocacy topics at the Access Center for Independent Living in Dayton, served as the keynote speaker at the Ohio Olmsted Task Force Conference and Easter Seals Legislative Day at the Statehouse, presented on Policing & Disabilities at the Ohio Providers Resource Association’s spring conference and gave an in depth presentation for University of Cincinnati’s LEND program.

To top things off, I am excited about completing and hosting my first webinar for LOOPOHIO.org on “How to Tell Your Story of Advocacy in a Positive Light.”

I credit my advocacy success to many, including my wonderful family who I refer to as the “Super Coopers”! My family has been rooting me on from the start and supporting me in everything I do. My teachers, therapists, counselors, doctors, principals, friends, co-workers, providers and every advocate that has ever crossed my path has taught me something.

Life is good and I love advocating for myself and those with disabilities. If I had to choose where my journey was going to take me next, I would say, “talk show host!” The sky is the limit as long as I have the one who’s looking down on me.

***Take Your Passion and Become a Change Agent!***

[Check Out Shari’s Blog](#)



[Share Your Change Agent Story on Facebook!](#)



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## Remote Monitoring **FACTS**

### What is remote monitoring?

When electronic equipment is used to support a person from a distance, we call that remote monitoring.

### Why use remote monitoring?

Remote monitoring promotes independence. It allows people to be both alone and safe in their homes.

### Assistive technology

Many different things are called assistive technology. They range from wheelchairs to communication devices, and they are used to increase or maintain a person's abilities. Remote monitoring is different because it promotes independent living, rather than assisting with a specific task.

### Electronic equipment

A person with a disability and their team can create a remote monitoring system that works best for them. A video camera is only used when a person has decided that it can meet their needs. But a camera is not always used.

Sensor technology can be used, even when a camera is not used. Sensors are electronics that send messages to a support person when someone needs help. For example: a support person may get a message if someone burns their popcorn and it creates smoke. Sensors can be hidden and are easy to use.

### Conclusion

Remote monitoring helps people live safely at home without having someone else there. Teams should talk about the option of remote monitoring, before placing support staff in the home.

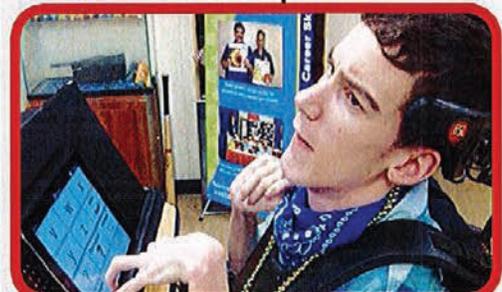
Spending time with people is an important part of caregiving. Technology does not replace the support provided by people. However, this technology does give support workers more time to spend with those who have the most need.



All waivers support remote services



Support people are always available to help



Remote service providers will teach customers how to use the equipment

## Waivers

All Ohio waivers for people with developmental disabilities support remote monitoring services and equipment. Each waiver has different rules about how to pay for these services.

### Self Empowered Life Funding (SELF) waiver

When the SELF waiver is used, the total cost cannot be more than \$25,000 every year. If remote monitoring is combined with community inclusion, residential respite, or community respite the total cost is still \$25,000. Also, remote monitoring equipment cannot cost more than \$5,000 per year.

### Level One Waiver

When a person uses a Level One waiver, the cost of services cannot cost more than \$7,500 every three years.

### The Individual Options Waiver (I-O)

The I-O Waiver does not have a limit on the amount of money that can be used for remote monitoring equipment or services.

#### Remote Monitoring Services:

The use of technology to support a person in their home and make sure they are safe.

#### Remote Monitoring Equipment:

Remote monitoring uses technology that can send a message very fast. Equipment includes things like door sensors, seizure mats, and cameras. People who use this equipment are always able to talk to support people from home

Remote monitoring is a service someone could use during times when they do not have a support person working in their home. Sometimes the best support comes from people working in the home. However, other times, having people in the homes of people with developmental disabilities might unintentionally encourage reliance on others. Remote monitoring gives people the chance to do more on their own, while remaining healthy and safe.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I know if I am able to use the service?

People in Ohio with developmental disability waivers are able to use remote monitoring. They should talk with their team to find out if remote monitoring can meet their needs.

### What do remote monitoring workers do at work?

Remote monitoring workers are focused on the people they serve. They will watch their computer and are ready to help in case of an emergency, or if someone needs to talk.

### What happens if the power goes out?

The remote monitoring provider has backup power. If a person's power goes out at home, then a support person will be sent to that home.

### What happens if there is an emergency?

If there is an emergency, the remote monitoring provider will call 9-1-1. A support person will also be called and come to the home. While the person waits, a remote monitoring worker will keep talking to the person until the emergency worker and support person arrive.

### Who is able to turn off the equipment?

Only people who are allowed can turn off remote monitoring equipment. These people are listed in the Individual Support Plan.

### How do I know my information is safe?

Access to the technology is only given to people who need it. The computer's information can only be read by people who know the answers to questions the computer asks.

For more information on remote monitoring, visit:  
<http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/5123:2-9-35> or seek rule 5123:2-9-35

The mission of The Ohio State University Nisonger Center is to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Even though a lot of people can use remote monitoring, only a small number of people are using it. This project aims to find out why so few people use remote monitoring services.

The project will also help us tell more people about remote monitoring and find ways to improve the technology.

Remote monitoring services can help many people with developmental disabilities to become more independent.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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**Coordinator, Technology Project**

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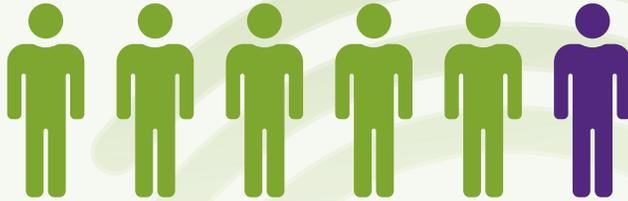
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# Hearing Loss and Hearing Aid Use

About **1 in 6**



U.S. adults ages 18 and over reports some trouble hearing.

=

**37.5 million**  
U.S. adults



**28.8 million**

U.S. adults could benefit from using hearing aids.



**Only 1 in 4 U.S. adults ages 20 and over who could benefit from hearing aids has used them.**



About **1 in 6** adults (16%)  
**ages 20 to 69**

About **1 in 3** adults (30%)  
**ages 70+**



**NIH** National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders

[www.nidcd.nih.gov](http://www.nidcd.nih.gov)

<https://twitter.com/nidcd>

**Sources:**

NIDCD Epidemiology and Statistics Program, based on December 2015 Census Bureau estimates of the noninstitutionalized U.S. population, personal communication; May 2016.

Blackwell, D.L., Lucas, J.W., Clarke T.C. (2014). Summary health statistics for U.S. adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2012. National Center for Health Statistics. *Vital Health Stat 10*(260). Retrieved May 31, 2016, from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_10/sr10\\_260.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_260.pdf) (PDF - 3.5 MB)

Based on calculations by NIDCD Epidemiology and Statistics Program staff using data collected by (1) the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) annually for number of persons who have ever used a hearing aid (numerator), and (2) periodic NHANES hearing exams for representative samples of the U.S. adult and older adult population [denominator]; these statistics are also used for tracking Healthy People 2010 and 2020 objectives.