

January 12, 2009

I did not intend to become a lobbyist.

In 1983, I was a stay-at-home mom in Greeley, raising two young children. My 3 year old son was diagnosed with insulin dependent diabetes and my life changed. I joined the Government Relations Committee of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, and over several years went to Washington, D.C. to talk with members of Congress about funding diabetes research to find a cure.

In 1987, our family moved to Colorado Springs. A friend who was on the JBC suggested I use my skills to lobby at the Colorado Capitol. I took my first contract as the Executive Director and lobbyist of an association of residential providers to people with developmental disabilities, and started as a lobbyist in the 1988 legislative session.

I use the passion I learned as a mother fighting for her child's health to represent nonprofits who were previously not represented at the Capitol.

My husband of 33 years and I continue to live in Colorado Springs. Our daughter is practicing law in Pennsylvania and lives with her husband, a county commissioner, and our two grandchildren. Our son has had diabetes for 25 years. After being a professional baseball umpire for several years, he now attends law school in San Diego.

My clients reflect issues which are important. I help them to bring to the attention of elected officials.

~Andi Leopoldus

- The Arc PLAN (Policy, Legislative and Advocacy Network) – an association of advocates for people with developmental disabilities including The Arc of Colorado, The Arc of Adams, The Arc of Aurora, The Association of Community Living in Boulder, The Arc of Mesa, The Arc of Weld, the Arc of the Pikes Peak, and The Arc of Pueblo.
- Easter Seals Colorado\*- serves children and adults with disabilities and other special needs.
- Goodwill Industries\* – interests include home care, mentoring, school-to-work, residential and job placement services to people with developmental disabilities, the elderly, the disadvantaged, adult day care, and welfare reform.
- The Chanda PLAN\* – a foundation whose mission is to improve the quality of life for people with physical disabilities through grants and education to access complementary and alternative therapies.
- Bridging the Gap at Mile-High United Way\*- my role is to advise youth who are aging out of the foster care system to engage in public policy and help them to have increased opportunities for successful transition to self-sufficiency.

- Shiloh House - residential and non-residential treatment to boys and young men whose lives have been impacted by abuse, neglect, and trauma.
- Colorado CASA\*- the state association of Court Appointed Special Advocates who advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children
- Colorado Children's Alliance- the state association of Children's Advocacy Centers - where the initial investigation and interview of child abuse occurs by a multi-disciplinary team in a child-friendly setting.
- Joint Initiatives for Youth and Families- interagency collaboration of 18 of the most senior leaders (CEOs, Presidents and Executive Directors) of Health, Human Services, Education, and Public Safety agencies in the Pikes Peak Region.
- San Luis Valley HMO\* - a nonprofit HMO serving the San Luis Valley and other parts of southern Colorado.

\*designates legislation in the 2009 session