How Soundbeam brings music to everyone
Hate crime success
Capability has been actively involved in campaigning on the issue of hate crimes for many years. In 2004 we carried out a survey which showed, alarmingly, that 47% of the disabled people who responded had experienced hate crime. We were therefore delighted when Patrick Harvie’s Offences (Aggravation By Prejudice) (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament. As Choice went to press the Bill was about to go into its third and final stage through Parliament. To find out happened visit our website. You can also turn to page 10 to read about someone who has experienced hate crime first hand.

Disabled parking bill passed
More success in parliament came on 1 April when the Disabled Persons’ Parking (Scotland) Bill introduced by Jackie Baillie became law. The law prevents disabled parking places being used by people who are not entitled to park in them, which means disabled people are stopped from being able to access essential services. The Bill will make a massive difference to the lives of disabled drivers across Scotland, enabling them to get in and out of their own homes and carry out day-to-day activities that many people take for granted. This is a real step forward for disabled people and will be of direct benefit to more than 200,000 people in Scotland entitled use disabled parking bays.

Disability has always been a champion of technology and strives to stay at the forefront of new developments. Recently we teamed up with Dundee and Aberdeen Universities to trial an innovative software system that enables children to communicate with a low communication difficulties to talk about their school day.

Minister’s question time
Disabled people gathered together at Capability’s Head Office on Monday 31 March with the aim of giving the Scotland Office Minister a good grilling. The group included Capability service users, disabled members of staff, equality trainings, MIND panel members and representatives of disability organisations. They met with Ann McKechin, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, to discuss the government’s new Equalities Bill and proposed welfare reforms.

After a short presentation the floor was opened to the group who asked a number of wide-ranging and penetrating questions. Issues were highlighted such as the possibility that the reforms would mean that disabled people would have to pay for services they had previously received for free. The Minister was also challenged on how the government would ensure its reforms were backed by funding and were not just rhetoric, plus whether it was right in the 21st century for children to have to be carers.

How was school today?
Capability has always been a champion of assistive technology and strives to stay at the forefront of new developments. Recently we teamed up with Dundee and Aberdeen Universities to trial an innovative software system that enables children to talk about their school day.

Sue Williams, head teacher at Corseford says: “How was school today?” finding out what pupils have been up to during their school day by using environmental sensors and class timetable information. This can then be turned into a story to share when pupils get home.

Pupils say “In the week we used the system we found it very useful for pupils, teachers, therapists and parents alike. It enables children to take control of the conversation without having to rely on help from us.”

Nicolé’s mum, Jan, says: “We really enjoyed using “How was school today?” and hearing Nicolé’s story. The program enabled her to talk easily and answer questions quickly, prompting more interaction and giving us a very detailed insight into her day.”

After the promising results and overwhelming support at Corseford, funding has been secured to try the prototype with more children over a longer period of time, and the pupils of Corseford School can’t wait! Nicolé says: “I really enjoyed using How was school today? as it is different to anything else I have used in the past.”

 Nicolé adds: “It made me feel really good about myself and I would definitely like to use it again.”

Dates for your diary
Ride the Rapids 13 September
Capability invites you to join us in a white water rafting experience on the River Tummel. Do you have what it takes to face foaming channels and white water rapids?

Abseil off the Forth Rail Bridge 11 October
Abseil SAS-style off the Forth Rail Bridge. Are you ready to face this 165ft Challenge?

Baxters Loch Ness Marathon & Festival of Running 4 October
Run through stunning Highland scenery and raise funds for Capability in the process. Choose your distance from 5k, 10k or for the fitness fanatics out there the marathon is on offer.

For more information please call the Fundraising team on 0800 980 5331 or email fundraising@capability-scotland.org.uk