

Rooted in Rights

Clark Matthews and Anna Zivarts

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Rooted in Rights tells authentic, accessible stories to challenge stigma and redefine narratives around disability, mental health, and chronic illness.

As part of Disability Rights Washington, our Seattle-based team of disabled video producers, editors, and digital organizers partner with both local coalitions and national advocacy campaigns to fight for concrete changes for our community.

Anna's Streets Advocacy

In 2009, I started writing what became a Streetsblog Network bike/transit blog ([Fifty Car Pileup](#), 2009-2011). I also began to volunteer on advocacy campaigns, including shooting [photo](#) and [video](#) for the direct-action group Right of Way, [StreetsPAC](#), [StreetsBlog](#), and what became [Families for Safe Streets](#). After a particularly deadly few months, I started a project to document intersections where people had been killed, which got picked up in [Gothamist](#) and [New York Magazine](#).

In 2017, after the birth of my son (who also has a genetic eye condition and like me, likely won't be able to drive), we moved to Tucson and I began to work with Living Streets Alliance, producing [two memorials](#) for people killed by drivers, the [launch](#) of bikeshare, Tucson's [Cyclovia](#), and [a video](#) to support the creation of a Complete Streets policy for Tucson (which just got adopted!)

But I was never public about my low vision - because I feared it would hurt my employment (I was a freelance video producer) and because I was worried that when I was hit by a car, no matter the circumstance, I would be the found at fault.

MASS Coalition - Moving All Seattle Sustainably

Seattle can have a world-class, multimodal transportation system

...that moves people efficiently and reliably. We can slash Seattle's carbon emissions and be a model for other cities by taking real action on climate change. We can have a city where people of all ages can walk to the store or bike to the park without close calls in intersections, or hop on a bus without getting stuck in gridlock. We can achieve Seattle's stated goal of zero traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2030. We can create an equitable transportation system that treats mobility as a human right.

www.masscoalition.org

Clark's Inclusive Design Origin Story

As someone who grew up using a wheelchair, I've always been keenly aware of the impact our built environment has on our lives. My accessibility activism began in 1986 when I started kindergarten at the elementary school three blocks away from my house. This was four years before the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law so there were no curb cuts in our town, and the only way to get around my neighborhood was to cross driveway to driveway. My family thought I should be able to take myself to school safely with my friends so they went to the Town Council. It was a long process but, after multiple hearings and a few news stories, they begrudgingly agreed to install six curb ramps.

The experience taught me that change can happen, but it takes a lot of work. It also introduced me, at the age of five, to a number of arguments against accessibility that I'd run up against throughout my life and continue to be bandied about today: "Who's going to benefit from these curb cuts? If Clark moves away, who's going to use them then?" and "This seems like an awful lot of money to spend on one little boy." More than thirty years later, it's reassuring to know many of us recognize how all kinds of people benefit from accessible design, and that when it comes to price, the reality is that excluding members of our community costs us much, much more. There's even a concept in sociology all about it - it's called The Curb Cut Effect.

Blocking the Box is Dangerous

According to a [study by Georgetown University](#), wheelchair users are 33 percent more likely to be killed by drivers than other pedestrians. When drivers block the box, it makes the streets more dangerous for everyone – which is why we're joining [Transportation Choices Coalition](#) to support legislation to allow traffic enforcement cameras.

[Our Advocacy Video](#)

Traffic Safety Camera Legislation

HB 1793 keeps people safe and traffic moving. This legislation would allow cities in Washington State to use automated enforcement (photographs) to help keep bus lanes clear for buses, crosswalks clear for people, and ensure traffic can flow through intersections when the light turns green.

Improves safety.

Impact

[1.5 million](#) people reached on Facebook, [60K](#) on Twitter.

Legislator Rep. Joel Fitzgibbon used the video to [introduce](#) the bill at its hearing

Two [network news](#) stories on KIRO7

HB 1793 has passed out of the House Transportation Committee. We are hoping it gets a floor vote TODAY.

You can support its passage by Tweeting you support for #HB1793 #DontBlockTheBox to #WALeg.

Future Campaigns

- Snow Removal Priorities and Sidewalk Maintenance by Property Owners
- Rolling and Walking Access Adjacent to Construction Sites
- Bikeshare Parking
- Traffic Signal Policy - including adequate crossing times

Work with environmental, transit and complete streets advocacy organizations to **center disability and access** - because it's a winning argument.

RootedInRights.org

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