

# How Wide is Your Welcome?

I was born with cerebral palsy in 1953. My first word was "Moo" as my family were living on a farm

In 1957 my grandpa promised me a John Deere pedal tractor if I could learn to walk..

1957-1965 I lived at the Crippled Children's School ( Anne Carlsen School) in Jamestown ND with 95 children with disabilities.

1972 I graduated from Minot High, Minot, ND

I started my speaking and advocacy career in 1975 and my non-profit Break Through Inc in 1978.

I co-authored my first book "**Breaking Through**" in 1981.

I graduated from University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin in 1992 with a B.S. Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation with GPA 3.79

In 2006 I married Dee, the love of my life.

In 2007 I wrote "**IQ of 63, So What, Going Beyond Everybody Else's Expectations**

2012 my booklet on bullying "**Last One Picked, So What!**" *We can turn it around.*

2014 booklet "**If I Can Do It, So Can You!**" *Going to College*

2015 "An Exploration on Hospitality"

2016--Commissioned minister of disabilities education and advocacy in the United Church of Christ

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## **Break Through Mission:**

*"Our mission is one of rehabilitation education and advocacy for and about people with disabilities to encourage and enlighten the public about people with disabilities in that they are people first and have rights and needs and that they also have gifts and talents to bring to the community."*

## **YOUR DONATIONS ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED**

(Break Through Inc. is a tax deductible 501 ( c ) (3)

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## **SPEAKER BEN D. ANDERSON**



### **"How Wide Is Your Welcome?"**

Imagine being a person without a home, without any food and without any parents. Imagine being outside and looking in. Looking in at all the excitement that is going on but this person cannot speak; cannot walk and doesn't even know how to write their name. How do you welcome somebody into your midst that doesn't have what you have? They don't have a job, they don't have an education and they don't have any money? How do you welcome them into your midst?

On Sunday morning we always say "You are Welcome" but are we really welcoming people that are not part of our congregation --or part of our clique --or part of the "coffee klatch" ---or part of the community? Do we really care?

John 15-16 said I have chosen you and appointed you to go forth in my name. For instance that person (that may be living under a bridge) he or she was appointed. Those that sit in a wheelchair and cannot speak - they are welcome. Jesus said "You are welcome".

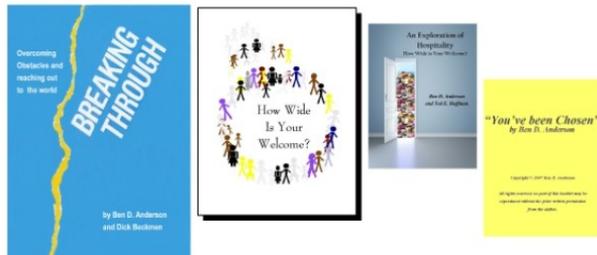
## THANK YOU FOR BEING A PART OF YOUR CHURCH COMMUNITY

I would like to ask you to connect with your communities, schools, organizations and businesses and ask them to consider bringing me in to speak on the many topics pertaining to disabilities and special needs.

Parents especially need to know about advocacy for their child and what is available. I love to speak with parents and encourage them and their child. I lecture on vocational rehabilitation and IEP's in colleges; I talk about bullying and disabilities to youths at schools and talking to youths to encourage them to do higher education. - **"If I Can Do It, So Can You"**

Please let others know about me and to visit my website at [www.bendanderson.com](http://www.bendanderson.com) or email me at [by@bendanderson.com](mailto:by@bendanderson.com)

If more than one or two schools, or parent groups can get together to bring me in during the same day or week that will greatly help with lowering my professional fees.



I have my books for sale. We take credit card, check or cash

## Ben's Reflections

As I reflect on these last 35 years. I'm not only amazed about where my organization Break Through has been, but by the people that have touched my life and allowed me to be a part of theirs. One important piece of the organization in the early years was to do home visits. To sit down with families, listen to them, discuss their child, and try to give them some encouragement. I have always enjoyed getting together with families because many of them become life long friends.

It is always fun to meet different congregations and to represent people with disabilities. What a humbling experience it is to have someone come up afterwards and say, "Your words have touched my life."

Whether it is at school, camp, church or an event it is joyful and challenging to work at youth gatherings. Youth are full of fun and excitement and many times I get caught up in their energy. You can't help but get caught up in their energy. Kids add a new point of view and new hope.

After being at many businesses and universities I can see that people are interested in learning how to relate better to others with disabilities and how to deal with their own disabilities.

It is really hard to know the impact of the message I have given over the years. But one hopes that it helps people. Many times I have received notes from someone I have been with in the recent past and they talk about what my message meant to them on a personal level.

My wife Dee and I look forward to meeting many more friends in the next decade. -Ben D. Anderson

