



January 26, 2021

Good morning members,

I hope to find you well. I wanted to let you know that we recently lost 3 advocates. Darwin Ness, Dan Remick and Jeannie Gross were all from the Madison area, and they passed away a week from each other. I had the pleasure of meeting all 3 of them in 2019 with Lisa, Fil and Secretary Palm. Darwin was a roommate of Dan's, who **lived with caregivers that helped them on a daily basis and lived meaningful lives**. Dan and Darwin were both founders of People First Wisconsin.

Darwin worked for the state of Wisconsin, and was 91 years old. He worked up until his death. He lived in the state institution until 1985, getting out a year after myself. He was an avid skier, and fisherman, and lived a great life. Darwin was married, and is now reunited with his wife up in heaven.

Jeannie was an artist, and an advocate with many accomplishments. I just want Secretary Palm to know and see that **people with disabilities can live meaningful lives in the community and make their own choices & decisions**. You only get one chance at life, so make it count. We never know when our last day on this earth will be, so do what you want to do and follow your dreams. Live your life like it is your last day on earth. I do not mean to scare you in any way, but to inspire you to be your best each and every day.

Please keep in mind that we are still in a pandemic, and **should continue to be taking caution**. We do not know when vaccinations will be more available yet as we have encountered a shortage. There is a new strain of virus coming from Europe that is supposedly even more contagious than COVID-19. In order to be as safe as possible, **I recommend wearing a mask at all times when out in public, and even considering wearing a second one over it**. Please keep an eye on your mental health, and do not hesitate to reach out to someone if you need it.

Make sure to be there for others, and offer the same support that you would hope to receive. I hope that you have a great week, and thank you for reading my letter. Stay warm, and enjoy the snow! You can call my cell phone @ 414-852-6462 8:00am - 5:00pm, Monday - Thursday. If I am unable to take your call, I will call you back. You can reach **the cope hotline @ 1(262)-377-2673**.

Sincerely,

Cindy Bentley
Executive Director
People First Wisconsin