

Olmstead Haring

Monday March 31st, 2014

Carl Mando: Self Advocate, formerly at Polk State Center

I went to Polk when I was a little boy. My family brought me. My family came to see me one time. They (staff) dressed me up in a suit to see my family. I did not see them again. I left Polk when I was about 30 years old about 30 years ago. I went to the Barber center first.

Things I remember from Polk:

We had to get up at 5:30 in the morning and go to bed at 6 pm. When we were there we had to help with the cows or in the fields. Shower time – we had to line up to shower. We had to take our clothes off and put them on the bench. Everybody took a shower at the same time. When I was there the beds were very close together. We had to crawl over other people to get to our bed. Everybody was in one big room. The night watchman took my speakers from my record player. At Christmas Santa would come to each cottage. All he brought was bananas. I would walk across the railroad tracks to talk to the girls. I would talk to one of the girls. I did not get caught. It was worth it. I was in high school, I had long hair, the girls would whistle at me – look at that nice guy. I wore a nice suit. I went to the school in Oil city while I was at Polk.

(Carl's life now):

I can go places here. Beach, art class, shopping, anything. Take trips, go to races, we go to the Banjo Players practice on Tuesday nights. I go grocery shopping and get what I want. I got to see my family again. Aunts and Uncles and cousins. I can see all of my family here. I go to Art class and I go help at the Humane Society. We don't call it a group home. We just call it home. They are my family.