

Meet Magnus Andén from Stockholm, Sweden: Magnus knows the value of life

Magnus Andén has been the chairman of JAG since the association started in 1992, nearly 20 years ago. In that role – as in life itself, as in this interview – Magnus needs support to formulate. This support is given to Magnus by his legal representative that functions both as a decision aid and interpreter.

What is your personal experience of disability?

I have very reduced mobility and also an intellectual disability. In television I once was called “the man who can move two fingers”. I have personal assistance around the clock by the JAG user cooperative.

That I have no speech is probably the hardest thing for me. Since I am very fond of socializing with others, I would so much have liked to make myself understood in a simple manner. That I cannot talk does not mean I have nothing to say.

Who has influenced you the most, and how?

For me, as for many others, the family is most important. They have always supported me. It was thanks to my mom's struggle that I - as one of the first in Sweden, and long before there was any legal right - got personal assistance already at the age of 7. My personal assistants also mean a lot to me. I have had many assistants over the years and have taken many of them to my heart.

What personal achievement are you most proud of?

First of all, when I succeed with my resolutions. Of course, I am also proud that through my involvement in JAG and ENIL I get the opportunity to improve the world and influence so that others do not have to stay in institutions. Without me probably people with intellectual disabilities wouldn't have had personal assistance in Sweden.

I was lucky to be born in Sweden and have not had to live my life in an institution. So helping others is important to me.

What makes you laugh?

I like surprises, jokes, dancing and music, particularly jazz, and happy, positive people. Basically I am a very positive person and do not like worries and problems. Therefore I prefer to spend time with other happy people.

What makes you angry?

People who think I'm awkward. People who talk shit about me when I'm listening. If someone tries to force me to do something I don't want to do.

What do you do to relax?

Listening to music, play synth or see on television. I enjoy getting tactile stimulation or massage.

What advice would you give to young adults with a disability?

You have to be stubborn. You should not give up if you think something is wrong, even if the surroundings is stupid and don't understand what you mean. I myself am a very patient man, but when I say no, it is something that must be addressed. I have several times been very ill, when it undoubtedly was my strong will that decided. I've survived on pure will.

Which are the most interesting policy issues?

For me there is no doubt: to have access to human and technical aid.

But it is also important to be able to travel by airplane. The Swedish climate does not suit me and I often go to Spain where I am enjoying the warmth, the sea-air and music at the pubs.

Click [here](#) to view pictures of Magnus Andén