

WESTCHESTER COUNTY BUSINESS JOURNAL

VOL. 45, No. 11 | \$2.50

March 13, 2006

www.WestchesterCBJ.com

fly ON THE WALL

THINKING MORE LOCAL ON DISABILITY ISSUES

Social inclusion and political clout for people with disabilities is likelier to come by winning local battles rather than waiting for action from Washington, a prominent member of the disability community said in White Plains last week.

"I don't think the national government is where the action is. I think people with disabilities look to their local communities to solve local problems, and I think with great success. And what you find is that accessibility is a function of community will," said "Dateline NBC" correspondent John Hockenberry.

Westchester, Hockenberry said, has been among the nation's more accessible areas thanks to "really activist and aggressive and well-organized" groups like Westchester Arc.

While Westchester and the nation have made progress, the full integration of people with dis-



Hockenberry

abilities into civic and political life remains a work in progress, he continued.

Hockenberry spoke in an interview minutes before his keynote address at "My Life, My Choice," a public discussion held March 7 at the Crowne Plaza hotel by Westchester Arc, the White Plains group that assists people with developmental disabilities.

After his talk, he joined a panel that included three self-advocates with disabilities, including poet-entrepreneur Bob Smith, Lois and Patsy Ginese, one of the state's first married couples with developmental disabilities; and Joseph Lambardozzi, a legal assistant with the Elmsford law firm Pappalardo Tombini & Wolff L.L.P.

Hockenberry has been in a wheelchair since a car accident left him paralyzed at age 19. Since then he has built a career as a journalist and author of books such as "A River Out of Eden" and "Moving Violations: War Zones, Wheelchairs and Declarations of Independence."

January marked his 10th anniversary at NBC.