In the early days of our organisation we began to build networks with people living with disability. We noticed a recurring theme. People were frustrated and angry about how the media portrayed disability. Phrases like someone being wheelchair bound made it sound like a prison, when in fact to the person, their wheelchair is an enabler, the way they get out into life.

Also words like suffering were being used a lot, where someone might be described as suffering from muscular dystrophy, or suffering from Downs syndrome. This made the person's disabilities sound like some kind of torment, when in fact it's simply a part of who the person is.

We also heard language being used in the media that group people together. Phrases like the disabled stripped away a person's uniqueness, because of one aspect of who they are. There were also problems with signage, that announced the presence of a disabled toilet, or a handicapped parking space. When really the point is that those facilities are accessible, not that the person is disabled.

Language matters because it shapes the way society views and treats people living with disabilities. And this in turn affects the way people living with disability view themselves. Often it is not someone's disability that holds them back, but society's interpretation of disability.

So working alongside people living with disability, Purple Orange developed the Word Up postcard, a simple self-advocacy tool that someone could use when they saw these problems. Our aim wasn't to offend the recipients of these postcards. Our aim was to show them the power and meaning behind their words, so that in the future they could be part of the solution, not the problem.

The success of the Word Up postcard led to another postcard called Access Alert. And this was designed to be used when a person was having trouble accessing a building or a public space, because of a lack of ramps, rails, or other access issues. 10 years on, we're building a digital platform to increase the ways people use these self-advocacy tools. And they're still important, because our communities remain heavy with inaccessibility, and unhelpful language.

As with all our work, our hope is that resources like this assist people living with disabilities to find their voice, take up leadership, and to rightfully claim their place as valid members in community life.