Advocates from the disability community attended a reception for legislators in the Capitol rotunda Thursday afternoon. The rotunda of the Capitol building in Salt Lake City was filled with advocates from the disability community Thursday afternoon for a reception with state legislators. The event, sponsored by the Legislative Coalition for People with Disabilities, drew several hundred people from organizations around the state, including Utah State University’s Center for Persons with Disabilities, OPTIONS for Independence and the Grassroots Advocacy Partnership. “It was great to see the community of advocates get to take over the Capitol building and get the attention of the legislators who were willing to come and meet them,” said Shane Johnson, CPD associate director of development. Northern Utah legislators who attended the reception were Rep. Ed Redd, Rep. Jack Draxler and Sen. Lyle Hillyard. Rep. Rhonda Menlove was in a committee meeting and could not attend. “It was well-attended, as it has been in previous years,” said Jeff Sheen, CPD policy analyst. “There were several legislators that I saw that are building genuine relationships with the disability community.” The atmosphere in the rotunda was upbeat, punctuated by handshakes and hugs as old friends met and new introductions were made. Sheen said the reception is an invaluable opportunity for advocates to meet with legislators to discuss issues and concerns. The large turnout speaks, as well, as a reason these events need to be held, he said. USU assistant professor of art and CPD Faculty Fellow Christopher Gauthier presented his exhibit, “Evidence and Artifacts: Facing Autism” as a slide show. Attendees were also able to view archival prints of the images and to talk to Gauthier about the project, which highlights the faces of people impacted by autism in Utah. Visit our Facebook page to see a photo album of the event.

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