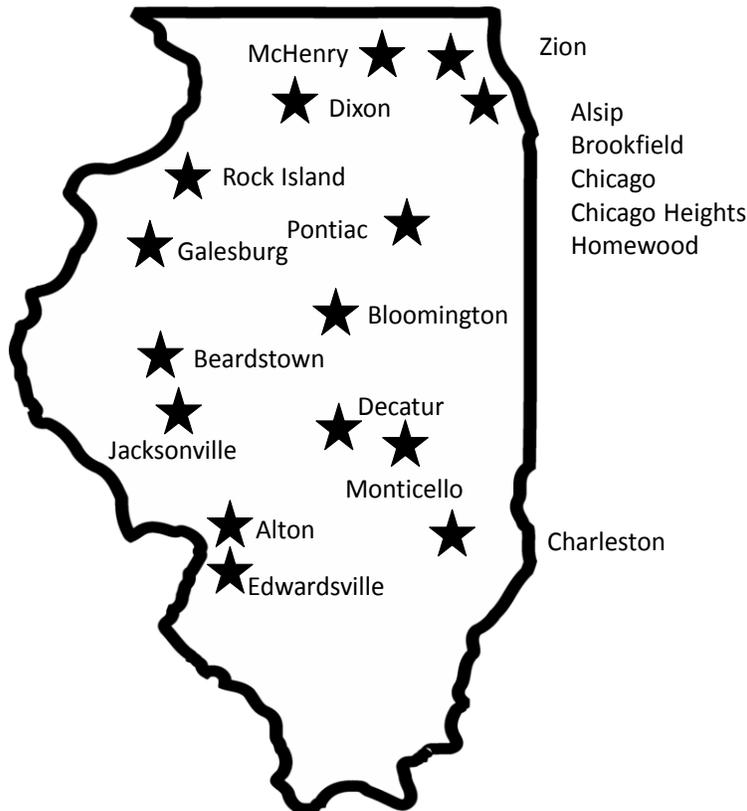


Illinois Self Advocacy Alliance

The Alliance News

Issue #March 2019



The Alliance is comprised of self-advocates and self-advocacy groups in Illinois. We are now 24 member groups strong as we welcome the newest member group, Voices of Atzlan (Chicago).

Our goal is to have 40 member groups by 2021...we are more than 1/2 way there!

Want to become a member group? Contact us at info@selfadvocacyalliance.org to learn more.

Our Vision

Our vision is for self-advocates to work together to get the support we need to live the life we want in the community.

Our Mission

Our mission is to speak up for ourselves and each other while working together to make changes in our communities and in Illinois.

Our Focus

Our focus is on empowering people to speak up about what they want and need, don't want and don't need, action plan their goals and participate in advocacy at the personal, agency, community and statewide levels.



This newsletter was developed under an investment by the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

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Find us on Facebook at Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance

On February 26 in Murphysboro and March 6 in Galesburg, self-advocates, family members, professionals and allies came together with the Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance (The Alliance) and The Arc of Illinois for a day of interactive learning and advocacy. Participants learned with and from each other about

- Self-advocacy and how to speak up
- Adult services in Illinois, case management, and navigating the system
- 2019 legislation and policy priorities that could impact you

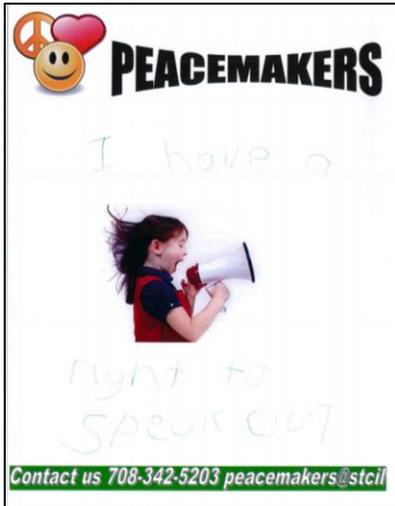
Murphysboro – February 26, 2019



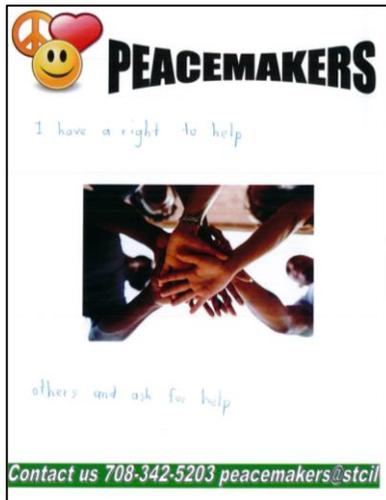
Galesburg – March 6, 2019



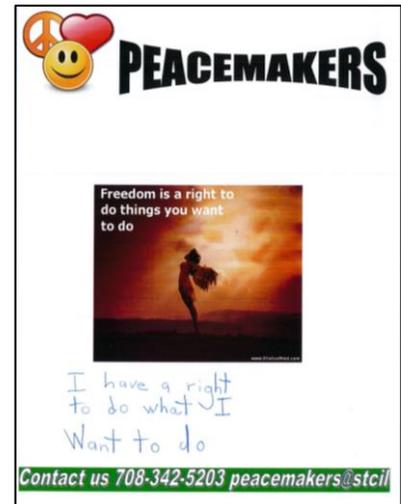
The Peacemakers is an Alliance member group located at St. Coletta’s of Illinois (Tinley Park). Throughout the year, Peacemakers create posters on different subjects and share them with our peers. This is our way of teaching advocacy to our friends.



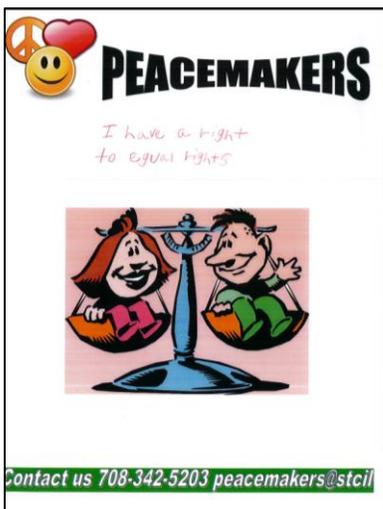
"I have a right to speak out."



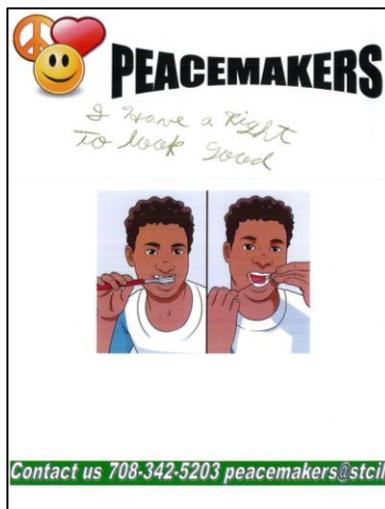
"I have a right to help others and ask for help."



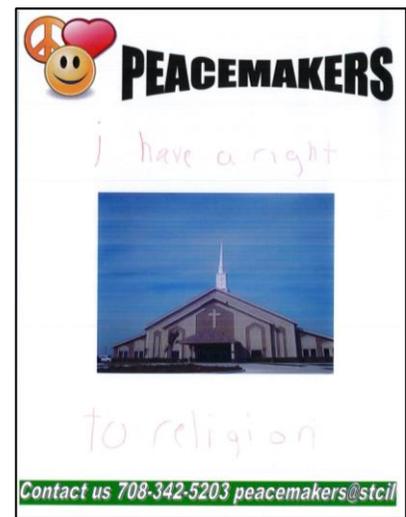
"I have a right to do what I want to do."



"I have a right to equal rights."



"I have a right to look good."



"I have a right to religion."



Why Public Transportation is Important to Me

~ Adam C., self-advocate

February 11, 2019

I'm going to discuss the national issue about the lack of transportation options for people who have disabilities since a lot of us can't drive due to disability. People who have disabilities in the USA have a transportation barrier which is lack of transportation for people who have disabilities since a lot of people who have disabilities can't drive due to disability. Have you ever thought about using public transportation to get from point a to point b. Most bigger towns have a transportation system and most small towns have a limited transportation system to no transportation system at all.

In February 2016 I moved in to an apartment on a fixed bus route. It has made it so much easier for me to go places that I want to go to. The public transportation system in my town is so much more reliable than the very limited transportation system my parent's town had. Now I'm going to tell you how much easier for me to get on the public transportation system. When I first moved in to the apartment complex, I asked the manager about when the bus stopped at the apartment complex and she said it stopped one time a day. Other residents and I had the transportation provider come to us and we discussed how the bus stopping at the apartment complex more often would be more convenient if it was cold rain or snow or if we were carrying a lot of bags and the public transportation provider has agreed to stop at our apartment complex every other hour Monday – Friday which has made the public transportation issue so much better.

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EQUIPPING A SELF-ADVOCACY GROUP TO BE SUCCESSFUL

By Leanne Mull | CQL Quality Enhancement Specialist
lmull@thecouncil.org



As an advisor for an organization-based advocacy group, my favorite experience occurred when I was running late for a scheduled meeting. When I arrived - prepared to page the group members to the conference room to begin - I opened the conference room door, and they had started the meeting without me. The entire group was together, the President had started the meeting and all I had to do was listen. They put into practice everything they had learned and began the meeting, as planned. This is not where we started, this took place nine years after the group was formed.

Getting to this place took time, training, and investment by the organization. When starting or further developing an organization-based advocacy group, these are some things to keep in mind:

- People who work at the organization need to know that executive leadership supports self-advocacy.
- Ask the people who receive services if they are interested in self-advocacy and involve them in every aspect of the creation of the group. This will include deciding on a name, how often to meet, where to meet, and choosing an advisor.
- Understand that becoming a self-advocate takes education, experience, exposure, courage, and support. Some people are finding their voice. When you are starting the group, it is important to make education a part of every meeting. Don't worry, there are lots of resources available!
- Remember that self-advocacy is a movement, not a program. Decide with the group, the level of interest in self-advocacy at the state or federal level. There are opportunities to join larger self-advocacy groups, like SABE or People First.
- Encourage different levels of participation within the group. Some people may become the core group while others only want to attend events. Meet people where they are.
- Be prepared for the group to advocate for things that the organization may not agree with as they grow in their self-advocacy skills.
- Do not let self-advocacy rest with one staff member. The more staff who are involved and on board with the organization's support of self-advocacy, the easier transitions will be when staff change roles within the organization or leave all together.
- Finally, don't wait nine years to be late to a meeting!

ADVICE FROM A NATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED SELF-ADVOCATE

By Tia Nelis | CQL Board Member | SABE Past-President

Tia Nelis is a recognized leader in the self-advocacy movement. Her local experiences with advocating for herself and others opened up the opportunity to be involved in state, national, and international advocacy efforts.

Tia shares her lessons learned and advice for self-advocates and organizations interested in promoting self-advocacy with her Top 10 suggestions:

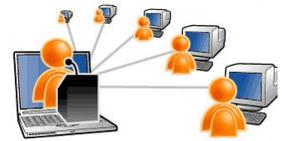
1. Remember whose group it is. Don't let others take over your group.
2. After you become a leader, be sure that you share your skills with others.
3. Don't be afraid to ask for support. It is okay. Everyone needs support.
4. It is okay to make mistakes.
5. If you see someone sitting alone in the meeting, go up to them and ask how they are.
6. You can't do everything. Look at all the things you are asked to do, then look at your schedule to see if you can take it on. Don't be afraid to say yes or no!
7. Don't do all the stuff people ask the group to do for free. The group should get paid for their work.
8. Being a self-advocate means first you learn how to speak up. Then help others speak up for things that are important to people with disabilities.
9. Most of all, work hard and have fun!
10. This is about your life, and not about a program.

WE NEED YOU!
TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

WE NEED YOU... to contribute to The Alliance newsletter each month. Share your ideas, hopes, dreams, success stories and challenges with The Alliance. You can submit an article, a poem, a piece of artwork, photography, write a column, or ask a question.

Let us know if you have any questions. Submit your content to info@selfadvocacyalliance.org.

“Equip for Equality: The Illinois Protection and Advocacy System” Webinar
Thursday, March 21, 2019 at 10am



Learn about the history and purpose of the federal Protection and Advocacy (P&A) System for people with disabilities and the services and programs provided by Equip for Equality, Illinois' Protection and Advocacy System. The webinar will be presented by Cheryl Jansen, Public Policy Director for Equip for Equality.

Register at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3427425530982185996>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

“Assistive Technology and Why It’s Important!”
Webinar Recording
Recorded Live on 2.21.19



<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/3066803309167786241>

Assistive technology is defined as products, equipment, and systems that enhance learning, working, and daily living for persons with disabilities. Let's learn about assistive technology of all kinds, from low to high tech and why it is important in all areas of life including school, work, play and independent living. Assistive technology is for all ages and disabilities!

Did You Know? The Alliance has been hosting regular webinars since 2013, providing self-advocates and allies with learning and advocacy opportunities. Some of the recently recorded webinars are listed below. To see a list of all recorded webinars, please visit <http://selfadvocacyalliance.org/webinars>

- Protection & Advocacy for Social Security Beneficiaries: How Equip for Equality Can Help You
- I Can Be Safe Online
- Let’s Learn About Illinois ABLE (Achieving A Better Life Experience) Accounts
- Living a Quality Life in Geneseo!
- We are All In This Together!
- Speak Up for Supportive Housing!
- Guardianship and You!
- Show Me the Money: Fundraising for Your Self-Advocacy Group



Save the Date

for the 6th Annual

Going Home Advocacy Day

Join hundreds of self-advocates and allies in **speaking up** and **speaking out** in support of community living for people with disabilities.

Thursday, May 16, 2019

Illinois State Capitol Rotunda Springfield, Illinois

8.30am (registration begins) – 2.30pm

Rally begins at 11am with lunch immediately following

After lunch, come back to the Rotunda for the
INCIL Rally at 1pm!

Registration Begins April 1, 2019

Going Home is an advocacy campaign dedicated to full inclusion and equality for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Going Home Campaign and INCIL (Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living) are partnering to make both our rallies even better!

For more information, please visit www.goinghomeillinois.org.

We are stronger when we are working together!