

Illinois Self Advocacy Alliance

The Alliance News

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Congratulations to Tavarus Wesley Arc of Illinois Advocate of the Year 2019



At the Arc of Illinois' annual conference in April 2019, Tavarus Wesley received the Advocate of the Year award. He was nominated for the award by the Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance for his work in self-advocacy throughout the state. As chair of the Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance's Board of Directors and president of New Star's advocacy group, PossAbility Partners, Tavarus has been a driving force in helping individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities learn how to speak for themselves and be their own advocate.

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

Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance

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Find us on Facebook at Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance



Two groups of advocates - one unified message.

We can do anything in our communities with the right supports!

Many thanks & congratulations to all the self-advocates who represented The Alliance at The Arc of Illinois convention in April! Derrick Morris, Jamie Ricketts & Brian Antczak presented "Self-Advocacy: A World of Possibilities" during the Thursday luncheon in front of hundreds of professionals, families and people with disabilities. They talked about the Alliance Ambassador Program & Partners in Policy Making, as well as the many other opportunities self-advocacy has brought them. People loved the presentation and it demonstrated the importance of "Nothing About Us Without Us"!

They were joined onstage by the Arc Mentors Sue, Robert, John & Bob who talked about their experiences living in state operated developmental centers and now the community.

Pictured are Robert Rowley, Brian Antczak, Bob Peterson, Susan O'Connor, John Porter, Jamie Ricketts, and Derrick Morris - all awesome advocates. Every person in this group believes in self-advocacy and makes a real contribution to their community.

Welcome Friendship League!

The Alliance is comprised of self-advocates and self-advocacy groups in Illinois. We are now 26 member groups strong as we welcome the newest member group, Friendship League (Tremont)!

Friendship League meets every week. Their mission/vision is "To help others who cannot speak up for themselves, and make positive changes in our community for those who have special needs".

The group's goals are:

- Educate our group members about their rights
- Recruit more members

Welcome Friendship League; we are excited to learn with and from you!

Our goal is to have 40 member groups by 2021...we are more than ½ way there! Want to become a member group? Contact us at info@selfadvocacyalliance.org to learn more.



Ability Marketplace

Ability Marketplace is an e-commerce marketplace and the destination for those with disabilities to find opportunities.

It's a place for business owners with disabilities to advertise their online or brick-and-mortar stores, and where the public can SHOP and show their support. We also have resources and a support network if you would like to start a business. Our mission is to create jobs and reduce the unemployment rate among people with disabilities.

Check us out at <https://abilitymarketplace.com/>

Recent Webinar Recordings



"History of the Disability Rights Movement" Recorded Live on Thursday, May 2, 2019

Learn about disability history with Nell Koneczny, a graduate student in Disability Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

View the recording at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/3783547453071502337>

"'Hello, How May I Help You?' How the Illinois Human Rights Authority Can Help You Maintain Your Rights" Recorded Live on Tuesday, May 14, 2019

This presentation will explain about the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission; Describe the Mission of the Human Rights Authority; Explain how the Authority can assist with retaining your rights; and Give examples of how the Authority has helped people.

Gene Seaman is the managing administrator for the southern regions of the Human Rights Authority, a division of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission. In addition to managing, Gene works on community outreach and marketing for the division. The Human Rights Authority serves as the investigatory body of the agency and serves people with disabilities throughout the state of Illinois. Prior to managing, Gene worked as the Human Rights Authority Coordinator for the Peoria region for over 8 years.

View the recording at

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/1308175144282835714?assets=true>

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.

Creative Souls



The national employment rate for individuals with disabilities is at 17.5 percent compared to the 65 percent of those without disabilities. Millions of people with disabilities are impacted due to unemployment. Creative Souls provides a workplace where people with disabilities design the artwork that goes on each pair of canvas shoes, shirt, etc., allowing them to express their creativity and individuality. _

Each artist at Creative Souls will be known as a ***Creative Soul***, because that is truly what they are!

Learn more at <https://becreativesouls.com/>. You can even submit your interest in becoming a Creative Soul artist!



Are you a self-advocate or professional who would like to present at the 2019 Speak Up and Speak Out Summit?

Check out the Call for Speakers at <http://selfadvocacyalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/CallForSpeakers2019.pdf>. This year's SUSO theme is "Hear My Voice, Support My Choice!" and will focus on providing attendees with information to help empower them to use their voice to make positive choices and changes in their life. Please submit your proposal no later than June 18, 2019.

"Let's Learn About Illinois' University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)" Webinar

Tuesday, July 23, 2019 at 10am CDT

Register at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6108078861572761612>

Join us to learn about the UCEDD for the state of Illinois. The Institute on Disability and Human Development (IDHD) at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) is Illinois' University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). Information about the national UCEDD network will be shared as well as our partners in Illinois. This webinar will share the scope of work being done at IDHD along with specific examples and resources that can be used by people with disabilities and their families, service providers and professionals working in the field, businesses and non-profits as well as policymakers.

About the Presenter: Katie Arnold is Director of Community Education for the Institute on Disability and Human Development and Co-Director of the National Resource Center on Family Support for the Family Support Research and Training Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She also serves as the Executive Director of the Sibling Leadership Network, a national nonprofit dedicated to providing siblings of individuals with disabilities the information and support to advocate with their brothers and sisters to promote issues important to them and their entire families. In her work, Ms. Arnold educates and conducts research on various topics including self-directed supports, supporting families, and relationships and sexuality for people with disabilities. Her work is anchored to her experience living in L'Arche communities with people with developmental disabilities based on mutual relationship. Katie's passion for making a positive impact is grounded in her experience as a family member of people with disabilities, including as a sister, a wife, and a new mother.

"The fastest way to full inclusion is through the power of friendship".

~ Jason Pasley

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Self-Advocacy and Transition

~ Krescene Beck, Organization Director
Illinois Self-Advocacy Alliance, Inc.

Miriam-Webster dictionary defines transition as “passage or movement from one state, stage, subject, or place to another”. That passage or movement can be from high school to college, from one job to another, from living with parents to living with friends or on your own, or many others. If you really think about it, moving through life is moving through a bunch of transitions!

Self-Advocacy during transitions is so important. Self-Advocacy is speaking up for yourself, for what you want and what you don't want. Other people in our lives are not mind readers, so if we don't tell them what we want, they won't know!

Self-Advocacy is like a puzzle, and the pieces of the puzzle are Who, What, When/Where, How, and Why. Let's learn about the puzzle together:

Who – Who can you advocate or speak up and speak out for? You can advocate for yourself, for your friends, or for other people but the most important person to advocate for is yourself.

What – What can you advocate or speak up and speak out for? Just a few of what you can advocate for are things you want or don't want; things you need or don't need; your hopes, dreams, and goals; a different job or class; or if you are unhappy, being hurt, or feeling unsafe.

When/Where – When and where can you advocate or speak up and speak out? You can advocate at home; at school; at your community day service; during IEP or person-centered planning meetings; in the community; at doctor's appointments; at the Capitol. You can advocate whenever you want and wherever you go!

How – How can you advocate or speak up and speak out? Lots of ways! You can write down what you want to say; ask for a meeting; make a phone call; send an email; send a text. No matter how you communicate – speaking, sign language, using a communication device, pointing, body language – you can speak up and speak out!

Why – Why should you advocate or speak up and speak out? It is good to ask for something you want or need or for something someone else may want or need; to put a stop to what you don't like or want; to get better services and supports; to show we are equal; and it is your right to speak up for yourself!

No matter where you are in your life's transitions, remember to “speak up and speak out” about the things that are important to you!



Statewide Independent Living Council SILC of Illinois

Our Vision

We see an Illinois where persons with disabilities are independent, in control of their lives and free from barriers to full participation in society.

We are seeking potential board members from diverse communities who are passionate about issues and rights regarding independent living affecting people with disabilities. SILC council members are appointed by the Governor and provide advisement on a variety of issues across all types of disabilities in areas such as housing, transportation, employment, and more. If you are interested in making an impact in the lives of people with disabilities across the state of Illinois please contact us for more details.

Be a part of a dynamic and strong team!

SILC Members:

- Help guide Independent Living services throughout our state of Illinois
- Help to ensure people with disabilities have access to services and resources they deserve at Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
- Gain valuable service & networking opportunities

For more information contact at: SILC@silcofillinois.org

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