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## 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.

## Mission

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

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An Initiative of the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

## My Experience with Leadership Training

By Tara Wickey



As the weather is getting colder, I am thinking about all the fun stuff I have gotten to do since I joined The Alliance. My main project has been to help organize and create our first annual Leadership Training. This year we held two trainings. The first was September 14<sup>th</sup> in Springfield and the second was in Joliet on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Total, we had about 90 self advocates and advisors participate! THANK YOU! It was FANTASTIC to meet each and every one of you!

During the training, we had lots of skits, activities and group discussions to make the day FUN and interactive. The first half of the day focused on mission and vision statements for groups, two skits performed by Alliance staff, the teamwork puzzle and a lesson on action planning. After a yummy lunch, we broke into small groups and talked about how we can be better leaders and advisors and had a mock meeting where everyone got to participate.



Every group got to take home a copy of our specially designed Local Group Manual, which is jam-packed with advocacy goodies! In the manual you will find sections of information that talk about; how to run a group, action planning,

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# The Alliance News

## LOCAL ISSUES

### Call to Action: Make a Difference

By Megan Norlin

Happy Fall Self-Advocates!

It's hard to believe Fall is already here. Fortunately, though, it means another Call To Action project for you all! To tell you the truth, I had a lot of trouble coming up with a project for this month's newsletter. Fortunately, I realized that Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> was Make a Difference Day.



Make a Difference Day is the largest national day of helping others. People spend the day lending a hand and volunteering for a worthy cause.

My challenge to the self-advocacy groups is to create your own "Make a Difference Day"! The great thing about volunteering is that you can do it any time you like. You don't have to do it when the calendar tells you to. Name the day whatever you like, and do whatever you like. If you and your group choose to take this challenge, the only thing that matters is that something gets done.

When you are as passionate about self-advocacy as many of you are, it can be easy to get wrapped up in it. It's expected. We have a long way to go as far as self-direction is concerned, and it's a great cause to fight for.

But the fact of the matter is, we aren't the only people having trouble getting what we need. There are plenty of other people out there who could use a little support, and it's always a good idea to take the time to remember them, and do what you can to help. What goes around comes around after all.

If you lend a hand to someone else in need, chances are they will be willing to do the same for you. Even if all the offer you is a voice, one voice can go a long way in any political cause. We need all the voices we can get. Who knows? Maybe the people that you help will inspire you to do something new in you group meetings. If you are interested in taking on Make a Difference Day, I have compiled a list of community service activities you and your group members could try. Remember it's only for one day. But if you put your heart in it, one day can make a big difference!

For more information, contact Megan at: [hottwheelz702@yahoo.com](mailto:hottwheelz702@yahoo.com).



**The Alliance is looking for a group to profile in the next newsletter!**

If your self-advocacy group would like to be featured in the Alliance newsletter, please contact Megan at [hottwheelz702@yahoo.com](mailto:hottwheelz702@yahoo.com) or 815-228-9829.



# The Alliance News

## AROUND ILLINOIS

### Alliance Supports Closing Institutions

By Terah Green



The Alliance is for the closure of the state institutions Jacksonville Developmental Center and Mabley Developmental Center. We are for this because we are for making people with disabilities have a

better quality of life, and living in the institutions you don't get that.

People with developmental disabilities would live a safer and healthier life if they lived in the community instead of institutions. Also the cost of living in a institution is greater then living in the community. And if the state were to close these places, the state would save a bunch of money that could be used to do other things.

It is not fair that people with developmental disabilities have to be placed back in institutions. There are currently 14 states that have closed their institutions. Illinois is so far behind it is not funny. We need to do some thing to fix our standings with the community.



The media understands that things need to change. The Rockford Register Star said on April 27, 2011 that " Illinois has its priorities backward." and "Is it any wonder why Illinois is ranked 51<sup>st</sup> in the nation for supporting citizens in their community?" I agree.

I think that the state needs to get it together and figure out what they need to do to move up in the ranking system. I think closing the institutions will help with that. It is also important to make sure that people with disabilities live a full healthy and happy life the way they want to.

We need better for people with disabilities so lets close the institutions!



*NOTE: The pictures used in this article are from Freedom Quest '09, where hundreds of people with disabilities and their supporters rallied for the Blueprint. Their messages are still fitting for today!*

**SPEAK UP AND SPEAK OUT**  
**summit**

**See you There!!!!**

**November 15-16, 2011**

**Hilton Hotel, Springfield, IL**

**Questions?** 815-464-1832 [janet@thearcofil.org](mailto:janet@thearcofil.org)





# The Alliance News

## FUN PAGE

### ...Leadership Training

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teamwork, advisor & self advocate roles and responsibilities. Beyond this, the manual has TONS of cool ideas that your group can do as a team. This might be a fundraising activity, service project in your community or something having to do with political advocacy. If your group was not able to attend the training, contact The Alliance so we can send you a copy!

Overall, the trainings were a success and we thank everyone who was able to attend. If your group has things you want to work on, let The Alliance know! We are MORE than happy to review sections from the manual at one of your meetings...

Good to meet you all and I look forward to seeing many of you at Speak Up, Speak Out in November! You better bring your dancing shoes; I will see you on the dance floor!



Join us for

**Self-Direction  
Input  
Sessions!**



The Alliance has been working with Robin Cooper, a national consultant, and state staff to include self-direction in the waiver renewal.

We are ready to share what we have been working on and learn what you think!

In December, we will be holding input sessions in:

**Decatur**

**Rock Island**

**Chicago Heights**

**Alton**

We will send out an email with all the details as soon as we know the dates.

Thanks!